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ESSAYS

IN

ECCLESIASTICAL BIOGRAPHY.

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BY

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

SIR JAMES STEPHEN, K.C.B.

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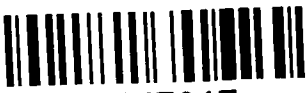

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ESSAYS

IN

ECCLESIASTICAL BIOGRAPHY,

ETC.

RICHARD BAXTER.

THE recent republication of the whole of the voluminous practical works of Richard Baxter, under the superintendence of the late Mr. Orme, may be considered, in legal phrase, as a demand for judgment, in the appeal of the great Nonconformist to the ultimate tribunal of posterity, from the censures of his own age, on himself and his writings. We think that the decision was substantially right, and that, on the whole, it must be affirmed. Right it was, beyond all doubt, in so far as it assigned to him an elevated rank amongst those, who, taking the spiritual improvement of mankind for their province, have found there at once the motive and the reward for labours beneath which, unless sustained by that

holy impulse, the utmost powers of our frail nature must have prematurely fainted.

About the time when the high-born guests of Whitehall were celebrating the nuptial revels of Elizabeth and the Elector Palatine, and the visiters of low degree were defraying the cost by the purchase of titles and monopolies, there was living at the pleasant village of Eaton Constantine, between the Wrekin Hill and the Severn, a substantial yeoman, incurious alike about the politics of the empire and the wants of the exchequer. Yet was he not without his vexations. On the green before his door, a Maypole, hung with garlands, allured the retiring congregation to dance out the Sunday afternoon to the sound of fife and tabret; while he, intent on the study of the sacred volume, was greeted with no better names than Puritan, Precisian, and Hypocrite. If he bent his steps to the parish church, venerable as it was, and picturesque, in contempt of all styles and orders of architecture, his case was not much mended. There the aged and purblind incumbent executed his weekly task with the aid of strange associates. One of them had laid aside the flail, and another the thimble, to mount the reading desk. To these succeeded 'the excellentest stage player in all the country, and a good gamester, and a good fellow.' This worthy having received Holy Orders, forged the like for a neighbour's son, who, on the strength of that title, officiated in the pulpit and at the altar. Next in this goodly list came an attorney's clerk, who had 'tippled himself into so great poverty,' that he had no other way to live but by assuming the pastoral care of the flock at Eaton Constantine. Time out of mind, the curate, whoever he might chance to be, had been ex-officio the sole professor of secular, as well as of sacred literature

in the parish; and to each in turn of these learned persons our yeoman was therefore fain to commit the education of his only son and namesake, Richard Baxter.

Such, from his tenth to his sixteenth year, were the teachers of the most voluminous theological writer in the English language. Of that period of his life, the only incidents which can now be ascertained are, that his love of apples was inordinate, and that, on the subject of robbing orchards, he held, in practice at least, the doctrines handed down amongst school-boys by an unbroken tradition.

Almost as barren is the only extant record of the three remaining years of his pupilage. "They were spent at the endowed school at Wroxeter, which he quitted at the age of nineteen, destitute of all mathematical and physical science — ignorant of Hebrew — a mere smatterer in Greek — and possessed of as much Latin as enabled him in after life to use it with reckless facility. Yet, it was not possible that a mind so prolific, and which yielded such early fruits, should have advanced to manhood without much well-directed culture.

The Bible which lay on his father's table, formed the whole of the good man's library, and would have been ill exchanged for all the treasures of the Vatican. He had been no stranger to the cares, nor indeed to the disorders of life; and, as his strength declined, it was his delight to inculcate on his inquisitive boy the lessons which inspired wisdom teaches most persuasively, when illustrated by dear-bought experience, and enforced by parental love. For the mental infirmities of the son, no better discipline could have been found. A pyrrhonist of nature's making, his threescore years and ten might have been exhausted in a

fruitless struggle to adjudicate between antagonist theories, if his mind had not thus been subjugated to the supreme authority of Holy Writ, by an influence coeval with the first dawn of reason, and associated indissolubly with his earliest and most enduring affections. It is neither the wise nor the good by whom the patrimony of opinion is most lightly regarded. Such is the condition of our existence, that, beyond the precincts of abstract science, we must take much for granted, if we would make any advance in knowledge, or live to any useful end. Our hereditary prepossessions must not only precede our acquired judgments, but must conduct us to them. To begin by questioning every thing, is to end by answering nothing; and a premature revolt from human authority is but an incipient rebellion against conscience, reason, and truth.

Launched into the ocean of speculative inquiry, without the anchorage of parental instruction and filial reverence, Baxter would have been drawn by his constitutional tendencies into that sceptical philosophy, through the long annals of which no single name is to be found to which the gratitude of mankind has been yielded, or is justly due. He had much in common with the most eminent doctors of that school—the animal frame, characterised by sluggish appetites, languid passions, and great nervous energy; the intellectual nature distinguished by subtlety to seize distinctions more than by wit to detect analogies; by the power to dive, instead of the faculty to soar; by skill to analyse subjective truths, rather than by ability to combine them with each other and with objective realities into one symmetrical structure. But what was wanting in his sensitive, and deficient in his intellectual nature, was balanced and corrected by the spiritual elevation of his mind. If

not enamoured of the beautiful, nor conversant with the ideal, nor accustomed to grasp at the same time the comprehensive and the abstract, he enjoyed that clear mental vision which attends on moral purity — the rectitude of judgment which rewards the subjection of the will to the reason — the loftiness of thought awakened by habitual communion with the source of light — and the earnest stability of purpose inseparable from the predominance of the social above the selfish affections. Scepticism and devotion were the conflicting elements of his internal life ; but the radiance from above gradually dispersed the vapours from beneath, and through half a century of pain, and strife, and agitation, he enjoyed that settled tranquillity which no efforts merely intellectual can attain, nor any speculative doubts destroy,—the peace, of which it is said, that it passes understanding.

Baxter was born in 1615, and consequently attained his early manhood amidst events ominous of approaching revolutions. Deep and latent as are the ultimate causes of the continued existence of Episcopacy in England, nothing can be less recondite than the human agency employed in working out that result. Nursed by the Tudors, adopted by the Stuarts, and wedded in her youth to a powerful aristocracy, the Anglican Church retains the indelible stamp of these early alliances. To the great, the learned, and the worldly wise, it has for three centuries afforded a resting-place and a refuge. But a long interval had elapsed before the national temples and hierarchy were consecrated to the nobler end of enlightening the ignorant, and of administering comfort to the poor. Rich beyond all Protestant rivalry in sacred literature, the Church of England, from the days of Parker to those

of Laud, had scarcely produced any one considerable work of popular instruction. The pastoral care which at a later period Burnet depicted, was till then a vision which, though since nobly fulfilled, no past experience had realised. The alphabet was among the mysteries which the English Church long concealed from her catechumens. There is no parallel in the annals of any other Protestant State, of so wonderful a concentration, and so imperfect a diffusion of learning and genius, of piety and zeal. The reigns of Whitgift, Bancroft, and Laud, were unmolested by cares so rude as those of evangelising the artisans and peasantry. Jewell and Bull, Hall and Donne, Hooker and Taylor, lived and wrote for their peers, and for future ages, but not for the commonalty of their own.

Yet was not Christianity bereft in England of her distinctive and glorious privilege. It was still the religion of the poor. Amidst persecution, contempt, and penury, the Puritans had toiled and suffered, and had, not rarely, died in their service. And thus in every city, and almost in every village, they who had eyes to see, and ears to hear, might, at the commencement of the seventeenth century, perceive the harbingers of the coming tempest. Thoughtful and resolute men had transferred the allegiance of the heart from their legitimate, to their chosen leaders; while, unconscious of their danger, the ruling powers were straining the bonds of authority, in exact proportion to the decrease of their number and their strength. It was when the future pastors of New England were training men to a generous contempt of all sublunary interest for conscience sake, that Laud, not content to be terrible to the founders of Connecticut and Massachusetts, braved an enmity far more to be dreaded than theirs. His truth and courage were far less

appropriate to the ends to which his life was devoted, than would have been the wily and time-serving genius of Williams. Supported by Heylin, Cosins, Montague, and many others, who adopted or exaggerated his own opinions, he precipitated, by a dull and uncompromising bigotry, the overthrow of a Church, in harmony with the character of the people, strong in their affections, upheld by a long line of illustrious names, connected with the whole aristocracy of the realm, and enthusiastically defended by the Sovereign.

Baxter's theological studies were commenced during these tumults, and were insensibly biassed by them. The 'Ecclesiastical Polity' had reconciled him to Episcopal ordination; but as he read, and listened, and observed further, his attachment to the established ritual and discipline progressively declined. He began by rejecting the practice of indiscriminate communion. He was dissatisfied with the compulsory subscription to articles, and the baptismal cross. 'Deeper thoughts on the point of Episcopacy' were suggested to him by the *et cetera* oath; and these reflections soon rendered him an irreconcilable adversary to the 'English Diocesan frame.' He distributed the sacred elements to those who would not kneel to receive them, and religiously abjured the surplice. Thus ripe for spiritual censures, and prepared to endure them, he was rescued from the danger he had braved by the demon of civil strife. The Scots in the north, and the Parliament in the south, summoned Charles and Laud to more serious cares than those of enforcing conformity, and left Baxter free to enlarge and to propagate his discoveries.

With liberty of speech and action, his mind was visited by a corresponding audacity of thought. Was

there indeed a future life? — Was the soul of man immortal? — Were the Scriptures true? Such were the questions which now assaulted and perplexed him. They came not as vexing and importunate suggestions, but 'under pretence of sober reason,' and all the resources of his understanding were summoned to resist the tempter. Self-deception was abhorrent from his nature. He feared the face of no speculative difficulty. Dark as were the shapes which crossed his path, they must be closely questioned; and gloomy as was the abyss to which they led, it was to be unhesitatingly explored. The result needs not to be stated. From a long and painful conflict he emerged victorious, but not without bearing to the grave some scars to mark the severity of the struggle. No man was ever blessed with more profound convictions; but so vast and elaborate was the basis of argumentation on which they rested, that to re-examine the texture, and ascertain the coherence of the materials of which it was wrought, formed the still recurring labour of his whole future life.

While the recluses of the world are engulfed in the vortices of metaphysics, the victims of passion are still urged forward in their wild career of guilt and misery. From the transcendental labyrinths through which Baxter was winding his solitary and painful way, the war recalled him to the stern realities of life. In the immediate vicinity of the earlier military operations, Coventry had become a city of refuge to him, and to a large body of his clerical brethren. They believed, in the simplicity of their hearts, that Essex, Waller, and Cromwell, were fighting the battles of Charles, and that their real object was to rescue the King from the thraldom of the Malignants, and the Church from the tyranny of the Prelatists. 'We kept,' says Baxter, speaking of himself and his asso-

ciates, 'to our old principles, and thought all others had done so too, except a very few inconsiderable persons. We were unfeignedly for King and Parliament. We believed that the war was only to save the Parliament and kingdom from the Papists and delinquents, and to remove the dividers, that the King might again return to his Parliament, and that no changes might be made in religion, but by the laws which had his free consent. We took the true happiness of King and people, Church and State, to be our end, and so we understood the covenant, engaging both against Papists and schismatics; and when the Court News-Book told the world of the swarms of Anabaptists in our armies, we thought it had been a mere lie, because it was not so with us.'

Ontology and scholastic divinity have their charms; and never did man confess them more than Richard Baxter. But the pulse must beat languidly indeed, when the superior fascination of the 'tented field' is not acknowledged; nor should it derogate from the reverence which attends his name, to admit that he felt and indulged this universal excitement. Slipping away from Durandus, Bradwardine, Suarez, and Ariminensis, he visited Edgehill and Naseby while the Parliamentary armies still occupied the ground on which they had fought. He found the conquerors armed *cap-a-pie* for spiritual, as well as carnal combats; and to convert the troops from their theological errors, was the duty which, he was assured, had been committed to him by Providence. Becoming accordingly chaplain to Whalley's regiment, he witnessed in that capacity many a skirmish, and was present at the sieges of Bristol, Sherborne, and Worcester. Rupert and Goring proved less stubborn antagonists than the seekers and levellers of the Lieutenant-General's camp; and Baxter was 'still employed in preaching, confer-

ring, and disputing against their confounding errors.' The soldiers discoursed as earnestly, and even published pamphlets as copiously as himself. After many an affair of posts, the hostile parties at length engaged in a pitched battle at Amersham in Buckinghamshire. 'When the public talking-day came,' says Baxter, 'I took the reading pew, and Pitchford's cornet and troopers took the gallery. There did the leader of the Chesham men begin, and afterwards Pitchford's soldiers set in; and I alone disputed against them from morning until almost night.' Too old a campaigner to retire from the field in the presence of his enemy, 'he staid it out till they first rose and went away.' The honours of the day were, however, disputed. In the strange book published by Edwards, under the appropriate title of 'Gangræna,' the fortunes of the field were chronicled; and there, as we are informed by Baxter himself, may be read 'the abundance of nonsense uttered on the occasion.'

Cromwell regarded these polemics with ill-disguised aversion, and probably with secret contempt. He had given Baxter but a cold welcome to the army. 'He would not dispute with me at all,' is a fact related by the good man with evident surprise; 'but he would in good discourse very fluently pour out himself in the extolling of free grace, which was savoury to those that had right principles, though he had some misunderstanding of free grace himself. He was a man of excellent natural parts for affection and oratory, but not well seen in the principles of his religion; of a sanguine complexion, naturally of such a vivacity, hilarity, and alacrity as another man hath when he hath drunken a cup too much; but naturally, also, so far from humble thoughts of himself, that it was his ruin.' The

Protector had surrendered his powerful mind to the religious fashions of his times, and never found the leisure or the inclination for deep inquiry into a subject on which it was enough for his purposes to excel in fluent and savoury discourse. Among those purposes, to obtain the approbation of his own conscience was not the least sincere. His devotion was ardent, and his piety genuine. But the alliance between habits of criminal self-indulgence, and a certain kind of theopathy, is but too ordinary a phenomenon. That at each step of his progress, Cromwell should have been deceived and sustained by some plausible sophistry, is the less wonderful, since even now, in retracing his course, it is difficult to ascertain the point at which he first quitted the straight path of duty, or to discover what escape was at length open to him from the web in which he had become involved. There have been many worse, and few greater men. Yet to vindicate his name from the condemnation which rests upon it, would be to confound the distinctions of good and evil as he did, without the apology of being tempted as he was.

Baxter was too profound a moralist to be dazzled by the triumph of bad men, however specious their virtues; or to affect any complacency towards a bad cause, though indebted to it for the only period of serenity which it ever was his lot to enjoy. He had ministered to the forces of the Parliamentary general, but abhorred the regicide and usurper. In his zeal for the ancient constitution, he had meditated a scheme for detaching his own regiment, and ultimately all the generals of the army, from their leader. They were first to be undermined by a course of logic, and then blown up by the eloquence of the preacher. This profound device in the science of theological

engineering would have been counterworked by the Lieutenant-General, had he detected it, by methods somewhat less subtle, but certainly not less effective. A fortunate illness defeated the formidable conspiracy, and restored the projector to his pastoral duties and to peace. Even then, his voice was publicly raised against 'the treason, rebellion, perfidiousness, and hypocrisy' of Cromwell, who probably never heard, and certainly never heeded, the denunciations of his former chaplain.

Baxter enjoyed the esteem which he would not repay. He was once invited by the Protector to preach at court. Sermons in those days were very serious things — point-blank shots at the bosoms of the auditory; and Cromwell was not a man to escape or to fear the heaviest pulpit ordnance which could be brought to bear on him. From the many vulnerable points of attack, the preacher selected the crying sin of encouraging sectaries. Not satisfied with the errors of his own days, the great Captain had anticipated those of a later age, and had asserted in their utmost extent the dangerous principles of religious liberty. This latitudinarian doctrine may have been suggested by motives merely selfish; and Baxter, at least, could acknowledge no deeper wisdom in which such an innovation could have had its birth. St. Paul was, therefore, made to testify 'against the sin committed by politicians, in maintaining divisions for their own ends, that they might fish in troubled waters.' He who now occupied the throne of the Stuarts claimed one prerogative to which even those monarchs had never aspired. It was that of controverting the argumentation of the pulpit. His zeal for the conversion of his monitor appears to have been exceedingly ardent. Having summoned him to his

presence, 'he began by a long tedious speech to me' (the narrative is Baxter's) 'of God's providence in the change of the government, and how God had owned it, and what great things had been done at home and abroad, in the peace with Spain and Holland, &c. When he had wearied us all with speaking thus slowly for about an hour, I told him it was too great a condescension to acquaint me so fully with all these matters which were above me; but I told him that we took our ancient monarchy to be a blessing, and not an evil, to the land; and humbly craved his patience that I might ask him how England had ever forfeited that blessing, and unto whom that forfeiture was made. Upon that question he was awakened into some passion, and then told me that it was no forfeiture, but God had changed it as pleased him; and then he let fly at the Parliament which thwarted him, and especially by name at four or five of those members who were my chief acquaintances, whom I presumed to defend against his passion, and thus four or five hours were spent.'

During this singular dialogue, Lambert fell asleep, an indecorum which, in the court of an hereditary monarch, would have been fatal to the prospects of the transgressor. But the drowsiness of his old comrade was more tolerable to Cromwell than the pertinacity of his former chaplain, against whom he a second time directed the artillery of his logic. On this occasion almost all the Privy Council were present; liberty of conscience being the thesis, Baxter the respondent, and Cromwell assuming to himself the double office of opponent and moderator. 'After another slow, tedious speech of his, I told him,' says the autobiographer, 'a little of my judgment, and when two of his company had spun out a great deal

more of the time in such like tedious, but more ignorant speeches, I told him, that if he would be at the labour to read it, I could tell him more of my mind in writing two sheets than in that way of speaking many days. He received the paper afterwards, but I scarcely believe that he ever read it. I saw that what he learnt must be from himself, being more disposed to speak many hours than hear one, and little heeding what another said when he had spoken himself.'

Whatever may have been the faults, or whatever the motives of the Protector, there can be no doubt that under his sway England witnessed a diffusion, till then unknown, of the purest influence of genuine religious principles. The popular historians of that period, from various motives, have disguised or misrepresented the fact; and they who derive their views on this subject from Clarendon, from Hume, or from Hudibras, mistake a caricature for a genuine portrait. To this result, no single man contributed more largely than Baxter himself, by his writings and his pastoral labours. His residence at Kidderminster during the whole of the Protectorate was the sabbath of his life; the interval in which his mind enjoyed the only repose of which it was capable, in labours of love, prompted by a willing heart, and unimpeded by a contentious world.

Good Protestants hold, that the Supreme Head of the Church reserves to himself alone to mediate and to reign, as his incommunicable attributes; and that to teach and to minister are the only offices he has delegated to the pastors of his flock. Wisdom to scale the heights of contemplation, love to explore the depths of wretchedness — a science and a servitude inseparably combined; — the one investigating

the relations between man and his Creator, the other busied in the cares of a self-denying philanthropy — such, at least in theory, are the endowments of that sacred institution, which, first established by the fishermen of Galilee, has been ever since maintained throughout the Christian commonwealth. A priesthood, of which all the members shall be animated with this spirit, may be expected when angels shall resume their visits to our earth, and not till then. Human agency, even when employed to distribute the best gifts of Providence to man, must still bear the impress of human guilt and frailty. But if there be one object in this fallen world, to which the eye, jaded by its pageantries and its gloom, continually turns with renovated hope, it is to an alliance, such as that which bound together Richard Baxter and the people among whom he dwelt. He, a poor man, rich in mental resources, consecrating alike his poverty and his wealth to their service; ever present to guide, to sooth, to encourage, and, when necessary, to rebuke; shrinking from no aspect of misery, however repulsive, nor from the most loathsome forms of guilt which he might hope to reclaim; — the instructor, at once, and the physician, the almoner and the friend, of his congregation. They, repaying his labours of love with untutored reverence; awed by his reproofs, and rejoicing in his smile; taught by him to discharge the most abject duties, and to endure the most pressing evils of life, as a daily tribute to their Divine benefactor; incurious of the novelties of their controversial age, but meekly thronging the altar from which he dispensed the symbols of their mystical union with each other and their common Head; and, at the close of their obscure, monotonous, but tranquil course, listening to the same parental voice, then

subdued to the gentlest tones of sympathy, and telling of bright hopes and of a glorious reward.

Little was there in common between Kidderminster and the 'sweet smiling' Auburn. Still less alike were the 'village preacher,' who 'ran his godly race,' after the fancy of Oliver Goldsmith, and the 'painful preacher,' whose emaciated form, gaunt visage, and Geneva bands, attested the severity of his studies, and testified against prelatic ascendency. Deeper yet the contrast between the delicate hues and fine touches of the portrait drawn from airy imagination, and Baxter's catalogue of his weekly catechisings, fasts, and conferences: of his Wednesday meetings and Thursday disputations; and of the thirty helps by which he was enabled to quicken into spiritual life the inert mass of a rude and vicious population. But, truth against fiction, all the world over, in the rivalry for genuine pathos and real sublimity! Though ever new and charming, after ten thousand repetitions, the plaintive, playful, melodious poetry of the 'Deserted Village' bears to the homely tale of the curate of Kidderminster a resemblance like that of the tapestried lists of a tournament to the well-fought field of Roncesvalles. Too prolix for quotation, and perhaps too sacred for our immediate purpose, it records one of those moral conquests which attest the existence in the human heart of faculties which, even when most oppressed by ignorance, or benumbed by guilt, may yet be roused to their noblest exercise, and disciplined for their ultimate perfection.

Eventful tidings disturbed these apostolical labours, and but too soon proved how precarious was the tenure of that religious liberty which Baxter at once enjoyed and condemned. With the Protectorate it commenced and ended. The death of Oliver, the abdica-

tion of Richard, the revival of the Long Parliament, the reappearance of the ejected members, the assembling of a new House of Commons under the auspices of Monk, and the restoration of the Stuarts, progressively endangered, and at length subverted the edifice of ecclesiastical freedom, which the same strong hand had founded and sustained.

Yet the issue for a while seemed doubtful. The sectarians over-rated their own strength, and the Episcopalians exaggerated their own weakness. Infallible and impeccable, the Church of Rome is a Tadmor in the wilderness, miraculously erect and beautiful in the midst of an otherwise universal ruin. The Church of England—liable to err, but always judging right, capable of misconduct, but never acting wrong — is a still more stupendous exception to the weakness and depravity which in all other human institutions signalises our common nature. But for this well-established truth, a hardy scepticism might have ventured to arraign her as an habitual alarmist. If she is 'in danger' at this moment, she has been so from her cradle. Puritans and Presbyterians, Arminians and Calvinists, Independents and Methodists, had for three centuries threatened her existence, when at last the matricidal hands of the metropolitan of all England, and of the prelate of England's metropolis, were in our own days irreverently laid on her prebendal stalls. One, 'whose bosom's lord sits lightly on his throne,' in the presence of all other forms of peril, has on this last fearful omen lost his accustomed fortitude*; though even the impending overthrow of the church he adorns, finds his wit as brilliant, and his

* See the Letters of the Rev. Sydney Smith to Archdeacon Singleton.

gaiety as indestructible as of yore. What wonder, then, if the canons expectant of St. Paul's at the Court of Breda, could not survey, even from that Pisgah, the fair land of promise lying before them, without many faint misgivings that the sons of Anak; who occupied the strongholds, would continue to enjoy the milk and honey, of their Palestine ? Thousands of intrusive incumbents, on whose heads no episcopal hand had ever been laid, and whose purity no surplice had ever symbolised, possessed the parsonages and the pulpits of either episcopal province. A population had grown up unbaptized with the sign of the cross, and instructed to repeat the longer and shorter catechisms of the Westminster Divines. Thirty thousand armed Covenanters yielded to Monk and his officers a dubious submission. Cudworth and Lightfoot at Cambridge, Wilkins and Wallis at Oxford, occupied and adorned the chairs of the ejected loyalists. The divine right of Episcopacy might yet be controverted by Baxter, Howe, and Owen ; and Smectymnus might awaken from his repose in the persons of Marshall, Calamy, and Spurstow. Little marvel then, that their eternal charter inspired a less exulting faith than of old in the Bishops who had assembled at Breda ; that Hyde and Southampton temporised ; or that Charles, impatient of the Protestant heresy in all its forms, and of Christianity itself in all its precepts, lent his royal name to an experiment of which deceit was the basis, and persecution the result.

Liberty of conscience, and a concurrence in any Act of Parliament which, on mature deliberation, should be offered for securing it, were solemnly promised by the King, while yet uncertain of the temper of the Commons he was about to meet. Ten Presbyterian ministers were added to the list of royal chaplains; and, for once a martyr to the public good,

Charles submitted himself to the penalty of assisting at four of their sermons. That with which Baxter greeted him, could not have been recited by the most rapid voice in less than two hours. It is a solemn contrast of the sensual and the spiritual life, without one courtly phrase to relieve his censure of the vices of the great. More soothing sounds were daily falling on the royal ear. The Surplice and the Book of Common Prayer had reappeared at the worship of the Lords and Commons. Heads and fellows of colleges enjoyed a restoration scarcely less triumphant than that of their sovereign. Long dormant statutes, arising from their slumbers, menaced the Nonconformists; and the truth was revealed to the delighted hierarchy, that the Church of England was still enthroned in the affections of the English people — the very type of their national character — the reflection of their calm good sense — of their reverence for hoar authority — of their fastidious distaste for whatever is scenic, impassioned, and self-assuming — of their deliberate preference for solid sense, even when oppressively dull, to mere rhetoric, however animated — and of their love for those grave observances and ancient forms which conduct the mind to self-communion, and lay open to the heart its long accumulated treasure of hidden, though profound, emotions. Happy if the confidence in her own strength excited by this discovery, had been blended either with the forgiveness and the love which the Gospel teaches; or with the toleration inculcated by human philosophy; or with the prudence which should be derived from a long course of suffering! Twenty-eight disgraceful years had then been blotted from the annals of the Anglican Church, and perhaps from the secular history of England.

The time was yet unripe for avowed retaliation, but wrongs and indignities such as those which the Episcopalians had suffered, were neither to be pardoned nor unavenged. Invited by the King to prepare a scheme of future church government, Baxter and his friends, taking Usher's 'Reduction of Episcopacy' as their basis, presented to Charles and the prelates a scheme of ecclesiastical reform. 'As to Archbishop Usher's model of government,' replied the bishops, 'we decline it as not consistent with his other learned discourses on the original of Episcopacy and of metropolitans, nor with the King's supremacy in causes ecclesiastical.' 'Had you read Gerson, Bucer, Parker, Baynes, Salmasius, Blondel, &c.,' rejoined Baxter, 'you would have seen just reason given for our dissent from the ecclesiastical hierarchy as established in England. You would easily grant that dioceses are too great, if you had ever conscionably tried the task which Dr. Hammond describeth as the bishop's work, or had ever believed Ignatius' and others' ancient descriptions of a bishop's church.'

To what issue this war of words was tending, no bystander could doubt. To maintain the splendour and the powers of Episcopacy, to yield nothing, and yet to avoid the appearance of a direct breach of the royal word, was so glaringly the object of the Court, that wilful blindness only could fail to penetrate the transparent veil of 'The Declaration' framed by Clarendon with all the astuteness of his profession, and accepted by the Presbyterians with the eagerness of expiring hope. Baxter was not so deceived. In common with the other heads of his party, he judged the faith of Charles an inadequate security, and refused the proffered mitre of Hereford as an insidious bribe.

There were abundant reasons for this distrust. Thanks for his gracious purposes in favour of the

Nonconformists had been presented to the Head of the Church by the House of Commons, who immediately afterwards, at the instance of his Majesty's Secretary of State, rejected the very measure which had kindled their gratitude. Three months had scarcely passed since the declaration had issued, when an Order in Council proclaimed the illegality of all religious meetings held without the walls of the parochial churches. The Book of Common Prayer and the Statute Book were daily cementing their alliance; the one enlarged by a supplication for 'grace carefully and studiously to imitate the example of the blessed saint and martyr' who had now attained the honours of canonization; the other requiring the officers of all corporate and port towns 'to take the sacrament of the Lord's Supper;' and to swear 'that it is not lawful, upon any pretence whatsoever, to take arms against the King,' or against 'those commissioned by him.'

Amidst these Parliamentary thunders were opened the conferences of the Savoy, which were to reduce to a definite meaning the declarations of Breda and of Whitehall. It was the scene of Baxter's triumph and defeat—the triumph of his promptitude, subtlety, and boundless resources—the defeat of the last hope he was permitted to indulge, of peace to himself or to the Church of which he was then the brightest ornament. The tactics of popular assemblies form a system of licensed deceit; and their conventional morality tolerates the avowal of the skill by which the antagonist party has been overreached, and even an open exultation in the success of such contrivances. To embarrass the Presbyterians by the course of the discussion, to invent plausible pretexts for delay, and to guide the controversy to an impotent, if not a

ludicrous close, were the scarcely concealed objects of the Episcopalians. Opposed to these by the feebler party were the contrivances by which weakness usually seeks to evade the difficulties it cannot stem, and the captiousness which few can restrain when overborne by the superior force of numbers or of authority.

Whoever has seen a Parliament, may easily imagine a Synod. Baxter was the leader of an unpopular opposition,—the Charles Fox of the Savoy, of which Morley was the William Pitt, and Gunning the Henry Dundas. To review the Book of Common Prayer, and 'to advise and consult upon the same, and the several objections and exceptions which shall be raised against the same,' was the task assigned by Charles to twelve bishops, nine doctors of divinity, and twenty-one Presbyterian divines. Exalted by the acclamation of the whole Episcopalian party to the head of all human writings, not without some doubts whether it should not rather class with those of the sacred canon, the Book of Common Prayer was pronounced by the bishops, at the opening of the conferences, to be exempt from any errors which they could detect, and incapable of any improvements which they could suggest. They could not therefore advance to the encounter until their antagonists should have unrolled the long catalogue of their hostile criticisms and projected amendments.

From such a challenge it was not in Baxter's nature to shrink, though warned by his associates of the motives by which it was dictated, and of the dangers to which it would lead. 'Bishop Sheldon,' says Burnet, 'saw well enough what the effect would be of obliging them to make all their demands at once, that the number would raise a mighty outcry against them as a people that could never be satisfied.' In fourteen days Baxter had prepared a new liturgy. In

a few more he had completed his objections to the former rubric, with an humble petition for peace and indulgence. Fast and thick flew over the field the missiles of theological theses before the closer conflict of oral debate. This was waged in high dialectic latitudes. Take the following example: — 'That command' (we quote the Episcopalian *proponitur*) 'which enjoins only an act in itself lawful, and no other act whereby an unjust penalty is enjoined, or any circumstance whence directly or *per accidens* any sin is consequent, which the commander ought to provide against, hath in it all things requisite to the lawfulness of a command, and particularly cannot be charged with enjoining an act *per accidens* unlawful, nor of commanding an act under an unjust penalty.' As an Indian listens to the war-cry of a hostile tribe, Baxter heard the announcement of this heretical doctrine, and plunged headlong into the fight. Pouring forth his boundless stores of metaphysical, moral, and scholastic speculation, he alternately plunged and soared beyond the reach of ordinary vision — distinguished and qualified, quoted and subtilised, till his voice was drowned 'in noise and confusion, and high reflections on his dark and cloudy imagination.' Bishop Sanderson, the Moderator, adjudged the palm of victory to his opponent. 'Baxter and Gunning' (the words are Burnet's) 'spent several days in logical arguing, to the diversion of the town, who looked upon them as a couple of fencers, engaged in a dispute that could not be brought to any end.' It had, however, reached the only end which the King and his advisers had ever contemplated. An apology had been made for the breach of the royal promise. Henceforth the Presbyterians might be denounced as men whom reason could not

convince, and who were therefore justly given up to the coercion of penal laws. To cast on them a still deeper shade of contumacy, some few trifling changes were made in the Rubric by the Convocation. The Church was required to celebrate the martyrdom of the first Charles, and the restoration of the second,—that 'most religious and gracious King' (the last an epithet with which in the same sentence the monarch was complimented and the Deity invoked); and, as if still more certainly to exclude from her pale those who had sued in vain for entrance, Bel and the Dragon, and other worthies of the Apocrypha, were now called to take their stations in her weekly services.

Had Charles been permitted to follow the dictates of his own easy nature, or of his religious predilections, he would (though for precisely opposite reasons) have emulated the zeal of Cromwell for liberty of conscience. He would gladly have secured that freedom to his Roman Catholic subjects; and would still more gladly have relieved himself from the trouble of persecuting the Protestant Dissenters. But the time was still unripe for such hazardous experiments. At the dictation of Clarendon, he was made to assure his Parliament that he was 'as much in love with the Book of Common Prayer as they could wish, and had prejudices enough against those who did not love it.' Within two years from his return, the depth and sincerity of this affection were attested by the imprisonment of more than four thousand Quakers, and by the promulgation of the Act of Uniformity. Among the two thousand clergymen whom this law excluded from the Church, Baxter was on every account the most conspicuous. He had refused the bishopric of Hereford, and the united interest of Charles and Clarendon had been exerted in vain (so

with most elaborate hypocrisy it was pretended) to recover for him a curacy at Kidderminster. He for ever quitted that scene of his apostolic labours; and, in the forty-seventh year of his age, bowed down with bodily infirmities, was driven from his home and his weeping congregation, to pass the remainder of his life in loathsome jails or precarious hiding-places; there to achieve, in penury and almost ceaseless pain, works without a parallel in the history of English theological literature, for their extent, or their prodigality of intellectual wealth.

Solitude was not amongst the aggravations of his lot. Margaret Charlton was a lady of gentle birth, rich in the gifts of nature and of fortune. She dwelt in her mother's house at Kidderminster, where both parent and child found in Baxter their teacher and spiritual guide. 'In her youth, pride and romances, and company suitable thereto, did take her up.' But sickness came, and he ministered to her anxieties; and health returned, and he led the thanksgiving of the congregation; and there were mental conflicts in which he sustained her, and works of mercy in which he directed her, and notes were made of his sermons, and passages were transcribed from his consolatory letters, and gradually — but who needs to be told the result?

Margaret was no ordinary woman. Her 'strangely vivid wit' is celebrated by the admirable John Howe; and her widowed husband, in 'The breviate of her life,' has drawn a portrait the original of which it would have been criminal not to love. Timid, gentle, and reserved, and nursed amidst all the luxuries of her age, her heart was the abode of affections so intense, and of a fortitude so enduring, that her meek spirit, impatient of one selfish wish, progressively ac-

quired all the heroism of benevolence, and seemed at length incapable of one selfish fear. In prison, in sickness, in evil report, in every form of danger and fatigue, she was still with unabated cheerfulness at the side of him to whom she had pledged her conjugal faith; — prompting him to the discharge of every duty, calming the asperities of his temper, his associate in unnumbered acts of philanthropy, embellishing his humble home by the little arts with which a cultivated mind imparts its own gracefulness to the meanest dwelling-place; and during the nineteen years of their union joining with him in one unbroken strain of filial affiance to the Divine mercy, and of a grateful adoration for the Divine goodness. Her tastes and habits had been moulded into a perfect conformity to his. He celebrates her Catholic charity to the opponents of their religious opinions, and her inflexible adherence to her own; her high esteem of the active and passive virtues of the Christian life, as contrasted with a barren orthodoxy; her noble disinterestedness, her skill in casuistry, her love of music, and her medicinal arts.

Peace be to the verses which he poured out not to extol but to animate her devotion. If Margaret was wooed in strains over which Sacharissa would have slumbered, Baxter's uncouth rhymes have a charm which Waller's lyrics cannot boast — the charm of purity, and reverence, and truth. The Eloise of Abelard, and the Eloise of Rousseau, revealing but too accurately one of the dark chambers of the human heart, have poisoned the imagination, and rendered it difficult to conceive of such ties as those which first drew together the souls of the Nonconformist minister and his pupil; — he approaching his fiftieth and she scarcely past her twentieth year; he stricken

with penury, disease, and persecution, and she in the enjoyment of affluence and of the world's alluring smiles. It was not in the reign of Charles II. that wit or will were wanting to ridicule or to upbraid such espousals. Grave men sighed over the weakness of the venerable divine; and gay men disported themselves with so effective an incident in the tragi-comedy of life. Much had the great moralist written upon the benefits of clerical celibacy, but, 'when he said so, he thought that he should die a bachelor.' Something he wrote as follows, in defence of his altered opinions: — 'The unsuitableness of our age, and my former known purposes against marriage and against the conveniency of ministers' marriage, who have no sort of necessity, made our marriage the matter of much talk;' but he most judiciously proceeds, 'the true opening of her case and mine, and the many strange occurrences which brought it to pass, would take away the wonder of her friends and mine that knew us, and the notice of it would much conduce to the understanding of some other passages of our lives. Yet wise friends, by whom I am advised, think it better to omit such personal particularities at this time. Both in her case and in mine there was much extraordinary, which it doth not much concern the world to be acquainted with.'

Under this apology, is veiled the fact that Margaret herself first felt, or first betrayed the truth, that a sublunary affection had blended itself with their devotional feelings; and that she encouraged him to claim that place in her heart which in the holiest of human beings will still remain accessible to a merely human sympathy. It was an attachment hallowed on either side by all that can give dignity to the passions to which all are alike subject. To her it afforded the

daily delight of supporting in his gigantic labours, and of soothing in his unremitted cares, a husband who repaid her tenderness with unceasing love and gratitude. To him it gave a friend whose presence was tranquillity, who tempered by her milder wisdom, and graced by her superior elegance, and exalted by her more confiding piety, whatever was austere, or rude, or distrustful in his rugged character. After all, it must be confessed that the story will not fall handsomely into any niche in the chronicles of romance; though, even in that light, Crabbe or Marmontel would have made something of it. Yet, unsupported by any powers of narrative, it is a tale which will never want its interest, so long as delight shall be felt in contemplating the submission of the sternest and most powerful minds to that kindly influence which cements and blesses, and which should ennoble human society.

Over the declining years of Baxter's life, friendship, as well as conjugal love, threw a glow of consolation which no man ever needed or ever valued more. His affectionate record of his associates has rescued some of their names from oblivion. Such is the case with 'good old Simon Ash, who went seasonably to heaven at the very time he was to be cast out of the church; who, having a good estate, and a very good wife, inclined to entertainments and liberality, kept a house much frequented by ministers, where, always cheerful, without profuse laughter or levity, and never troubled with doubtings,' he imparted to others the gaiety of his own heart, and died as he had lived, 'in great consolation and cheerful exercise of faith, molested with no fears or doubts, exceedingly glad of the company of his friends, and greatly encouraging all about him.' Such also was 'good Mr. James

Walton, commonly called the weeping prophet; of a most holy blameless life, and, though learned, greatly averse to controversy and dispute;' a man who had struggled successfully against constitutional melancholy, until, 'troubled with the sad case of the Church and the multitude of ministers cast out, and at his own unserviceableness, he consumed to death.'

To the Democritus and the Heraclitus of nonconformity, a far greater name succeeds in the catalogue of Baxter's friends. In the village of Acton, Sir Matthew Hale had found an occasional retreat from the cares of his judicial life; and devoted his leisure to science and theology, and to social intercourse with the ejected Nonconformist. In an age of civil strife, he had proposed to himself the example of Atticus, and, like that accomplished person, endeavoured to avert the enmity of the contending parties by the fearless discharge of his duties to all, without ministering to the selfish ends of any. The frugal simplicity of his habits, his unaffected piety and studious pursuits, enabled him to keep this hazardous path with general esteem, though he was more indebted for safety to his unrivalled eminence as a lawyer and a judge. Though Cromwell and Ludlow revolted against the Papal authority of Westminster Hall, their age lagged far behind them. In the overthrow of all other institutions, the courts in which Fortescue and Coke had explained or invented the immemorial customs of England, were still the objects of universal veneration; and the supremacy of the law secured to its sages the homage of the people. Never was it rendered more justly than to Hale. With the exception of Roger North we remember no historian of that day who does not bear an unqualified testimony to his uprightness, to the

surpassing compass of his professional learning, and the exquisite skill with which it was employed. That agreeable, though most prejudiced writer, refuses him not only this, but the still higher praise of spotless patriotism, and ridicules his pretensions as a philosopher and divine. Baxter, an incomparably better judge, thought far otherwise. In the learning in which he himself excelled all others, he assigned a high station to Hale; and has recorded that his 'conference, mostly about the immortality of the soul and other philosophical and foundation points, was so edifying, that his very questions and objections did help me to more light than other men's solutions.' Differing on those subjects which then agitated society, their minds, enlarged by nobler contemplations, rose far above the controversies of their age; and were united in efforts for their mutual improvement, and for advancing the interests of religion, truth, and virtue. It was a grave and severe, but an affectionate friendship; such as can subsist only between men who have lived in the habitual restraint of their lower faculties, and in the strenuous culture of those powers which they believe to be destined hereafter, and to be ripening now, for an indefinite expansion and an immortal existence.

From such intercourse Baxter was rudely called away. Not satisfied with the rigid uniformity of professed belief and external observances amongst the clergy of the Established Church, Parliament had denounced a scale of penalties, graduated from fine, to banishment to the plantations, against laics who should attend any other form of religious worship, even in private houses, where more than five strangers should be present. At Acton, a personage of no mean importance watched over the ecclesiastical dis-

cipline of the parish. 'Dr. Ryves, rector of that church and of Hadley, dean of Windsor and of Wolverhampton, and chaplain in ordinary to the King,' could not patiently endure the irregularities of his learned neighbour. The Dean indeed officiated by deputy, and his curate was a raw and ignorant youth; and Baxter (an occasional conformist) was a regular attendant on all the sacred offices. But he refused the Oxford oath, and at his domestic worship there were sometimes found more than the statutable addition to the family circle. Such offences demanded expiation. He was committed to Clerkenwell gaol; and, when at length discharged from it, was compelled to seek a new and more hospitable residence. He had his revenge. It was to obtain, through the influence of one of his most zealous disciples, the charter which incorporates the *original* Society for the Propagation of the Gospel * — a return of good for evil for which his name might well displace those of some of the saints in the calendar.

While the plague was depopulating London, and the silenced clergymen were discharging the unenvied office of watching over the multitude appointed to death, the King and Clarendon, at a secure distance from the contagion, were employed in framing the statute which denounced the most rigid punishment against any nonconformist minister who should approach within five miles of any town in England, or of any parish in which he had formerly officiated. Totteridge, a hamlet, round which a circle of ten miles

* The society which now bears that name is an institution of later date, founded on the model of that for the establishment of which Baxter laboured, and designed to sepersede it; just as the "National School Society" followed on the "British and Foreign School Society," or King's College, London, on the London University.

diameter could be drawn without including any of the residences thus proscribed to Baxter, became his next abode, but was not permitted to be a place of security or rest. His indefatigable pen had produced a paraphrase on the New Testament, where the keen scrutiny of his enemies detected libels, to be refuted only by the logic of the court and prison of the King's Bench. From the records of that court, Mr. Orme, the editor of Baxter's works, has extracted the indictment, which sets forth that 'Richardus Baxter, persona seditiosa et factiosa, pravæ mentis, impiæ, inquietæ, turbulent' disposition' et conversation';'—'falso, illicite, injuste, nequit', factiose, seditiose, et irreligiose, fecit, composuit, scripsit quendam falsum, seditiosum, libellosum, factiosum, et irreligiosum librum.' The classical pleader proceeds in a vein of unconscious humour to justify these hard words by the use of the figure called, we believe, a '*scilicet*' by those who now inhabit the ancient abode of the Knights Templars. 'It is folly,' says the paraphrase, 'to doubt whether there be devils, while devils incarnate dwell amongst us here' (clericos pred' hujus regni Angl' innuendo). 'What else but devils could make ceremonious hypocrites' (clericos pred' innuendo)? 'men that preach in Christ's name,' (seipsum R. B. et al' seditiosas et factiosas person' innuendo,) 'therefore, are not to be silenced if they do more harm than good. Dreadful then is the case of men' (episcopos et ministros justitiæ infr' hujus regni Angl' innuendo) 'that silence Christ's faithful ministers' (seipsum R. B. et al' seditiosas et factiosas person' innuendo).

Anstey and George Stevens were dull fellows, compared with the great originals from which they drew. L'Estrange himself might have taken a lesson in the art of defamation, from this inuendoing special

pleader. But the absurdity was crowned by the conduct of the trial. There were passages in the judicial career of Jeffries in which abhorrence, disgust, indignation, and all other feelings of the sterner kind, gave way to the irresistible sense of the ludicrous; and, 'to be grave exceeds all powers of face,' even when reading the narrative of this proceeding, which was drawn up by one of the spectators. The judge entered the court with his face flaming, 'he snorted and squeaked, blew his nose and clenched his hands, and lifted up his eyes, mimicking their manner, and running on furiously, as, he said, they used to pray.' The ermined buffoon extorted a smile even from the nonconformists themselves. Pollexfen, the leading counsel for the defence, gave into the humour, and attempted to gain attention for his argument by a jest. 'My Lord,' he said, 'some will think it a hard measure to stop these men's mouths, and not to let them speak through their noses.' 'Pollexfen,' said Jeffries, 'I know you well. You are the patron of the faction; this is an old rogue, who has poisoned the world with his Kidderminster doctrine. He encouraged all the women to bring their bodkins and thimbles, to carry on the war against their King, of ever blessed memory. An old schismatical knave — a hypocritical villain!' 'My Lord,' replied the counsel, 'Mr. Baxter's loyal and peaceable spirit, King Charles would have rewarded with a bishopric, when he came in, if he would have conformed.' 'Aye,' said the judge, 'we know that; but what ailed the old blockhead, the unthankful villain, that he would not conform? Is he wiser or better than other men? He hath been, ever since, the spring of the faction. I am sure he hath poisoned the world with his linsey-woolsey doctrine — a conceited, stubborn, fanatical dog!' After one counsel, and

another, had been overborne by the fury of Jeffries, Baxter himself took up the argument. 'My Lord,' he said, 'I have been so moderate with respect to the Church of England, that I have incurred the censure of many of the Dissenters on that account.' 'Baxter for Bishops,' exclaimed the judge, 'is a merry conceit indeed! Turn to it, turn to it!' On this one of the counsel turned to a passage in the libel, which stated, 'that great respect is due to those truly called bishops amongst us.' 'Ay,' said Jeffries, 'this is your Presbyterian cant, *truly* called to be bishops; that is of himself, and such rascals, called the bishops of Kidderminster, and other such places. The bishops set apart by such factious, snivelling, Presbyterians as himself; a Kidderminster bishop he means, when, according to the saying of a late learned author, every parish shall maintain a tythe-pig metropolitan.' Baxter offering to speak again, Jeffries exploded in the following apostrophe. 'Richard! Richard! dost thou think here to poison the court? Richard, thou art an old fellow — an old knave; thou has written books enough to load a cart, every one as full of sedition, I might say treason, as an egg is full of meat. Hadst thou been whipped out of thy writing trade forty years ago, it had been happy. I know thou hast a mighty party, and I see a great many of the brotherhood in corners, waiting to see what will become of their mighty Don, and a doctor of your party at your elbow; but I will crush you all. Come, what do you say for yourself, you old knave — come speak up, what doth he say? I am not afraid of him, or of all the snivelling calves you have got about you,' — alluding to some persons who were in tears at this scene. 'Your Lordship need not,' said Baxter, 'for I'll not hurt you. But these things will surely be

understood one day; what fools one sort of Protestants are made, to prosecute the other.' Then lifting up his eyes to Heaven, he said, 'I am not concerned to answer such stuff, but am ready to produce my writings, in confutation of all this; and my life and conversation are known to many in this nation.'

The jury returned a verdict of guilty, and, but for the resistance of the other judges, Jeffries would have added whipping through the city, to the sentence of imprisonment. It was to continue until the prisoner should have paid five hundred marks. Baxter was at that time in his seventieth year. A childless widower, groaning under agonies of bodily pain, and reduced by former persecutions to sell all that he possessed, he entered the King's Bench prison in utter poverty; and remained there for nearly two years, hopeless of any other abode on earth. But the hope of a mansion of eternal peace and love raised him beyond the reach of human tyranny. He possessed his soul in patience. Wise and good men resorted to his prison, and brought back from him greetings to his distant friends, and maxims of piety and prudence. Happy in the review of a well-spent life, and still happier in the prospect of its early close, his spirit enjoyed a calm for which his enemies might have joyfully resigned their mitres and their thrones. His pen, the faithful companion of his troubles, as of his joys, still plied the Herculean tasks which habit had rendered not merely easy, but delightful to him; and what mattered the gloomy walls or the obscene riot of a gaol, while he was free to wander from early dawn to nightfall over the sublime heights of devotion, or through the interminable, but, to him, not pathless, wilderness of psychology? There pain and mortal sickness were unheeded, and even his long-lost wife

forgotten, or remembered only that he might rejoice in the nearer approach of their indissoluble re-union. The altered policy of the Court restored him for a while to the questionable advantage of bodily freedom. 'At this time,' says the younger Calamy, 'he talked about another world like one that had been there, and was come as an express from thence to make a report concerning it.' But age, sickness, and persecution had done their work. His material frame gave way to the pressure of disease, though, in the language of one of his last associates, 'his soul abode rational, strong in faith and hope.' That his dying hours were agitated by the doubts which had clouded his earlier days, has been often, but erroneously, asserted. With manly truth, he rejected, as affectation, the wish for death to which some pretend. He assumed no stoical indifference to pain, and indulged in no unhallowed familiarity on those awful subjects which occupy the thoughts of him whose eye is closing on sublunary things, and is directed to an instant eternity. In profound lowliness, with a settled reliance on the Divine mercy, repeating at frequent intervals the prayer of the Redeemer on whom his hopes reposed, and breathing out benedictions on those who encircled his dying bed, he passed away from a life of almost unequalled toil and suffering, to a new condition of existence, where he doubted not to enjoy that perfect conformity of the human to the Divine will, to which, during his long and painful pilgrimage, it had been his ceaseless labour to attain.

The record of the solitary, rather than of the social, hours of a man of letters, must form the staple of his biography; yet he must be a strenuous reader, who should be able, from his own knowledge, to prepare

such a record of the fruits of Richard Baxter's solitude. After a familiarity of many years with his writings, we must avow, that of the one hundred and sixty-eight volumes comprised in the catalogue of his printed works, there are many which we have never opened, and many with which we can boast but a very slight acquaintance. These, however, are such as (to borrow a phrase from Mr. Hallam) have ceased to belong to men, and have become the property of moths. From the recesses of the library in Red Cross Street, they lower in the sullen majority of the folio age, over the pigmies of this duodecimo generation; the expressive, though neglected monuments of occurrences, which can never lose their place, or their interest, in the history of theological literature.

The English Reformation produced no Luther, Calvin, Zuingle, or Knox — no man who imparted to the national mind the impress of his own character, or the heritage of his religious creed. Our Reformers, Cranmer scarcely excepted, were statesmen rather than divines. Neither he, nor those more properly called the martyrs of the Church of England, ever attempted the stirring appeals to mankind at large, which awakened the echoes of the presses and the pulpits of Germany, Switzerland, and France. From the papal to the royal supremacy—from the legantine to the archiepiscopal power — from the Roman missal to the Anglican liturgy, the transition was easy, and, in many respects, not very perceptible. An ambidexter controversialist, the English Church warred at once with the errors of Rome and of Geneva; until, relenting towards her first antagonist, she turned the whole power of her arms against her domestic and more dreaded enemy. To the resources of piety, genius, and learning, she added less legitimate weapons;

and the Puritans underwent confiscation, imprisonment, exile, compulsory silence, — every thing, in short, except conviction. When the civil wars set loose their tongues and gave freedom to their pens, the Nonconformists found themselves without any established standard of religious belief; every question debatable; and every teacher conscience-bound to take his share in the debate. Presbyterians, Independents, Anabaptists, Seekers, Familists, Behmenists, and Quakers, were agreed only in cementing a firm alliance against their common enemies, the Prelatists and Papists. Those foes subdued, they turned against each other, some contending for supremacy, and some for toleration, but all for what they severally regarded, or professed to regard, as truth. Nor were theirs the polemics of the schools or the cloister. The war of religious opinion was accompanied by the roar of Cromwell's artillery, by the fall of ancient dynasties, and by the growth of a military, though a forbearing, despotism.

It was an age of deep earnestness. Frivolous and luxurious men had for a while retreated to make way for impassioned and high-wrought spirits; for the interpreters at once of the ancient revelations, and of the present judgments, of heaven; for the monitors of an ungodly world; and for the comforters of those who bent beneath the weight of national and domestic calamities. Such were that memorable race of authors to whom is given collectively the name of the Puritan divines; and such, above all the rest, was Richard Baxter. Intellectual efforts of such severity as his, relieved by not so much as one passing smile — public services of such extent, interrupted by no one recorded relaxation — thoughts so sleeplessly intent on those awful subjects, in the presence of which all

earthly interests are annihilated — might seem a weight too vast for human endurance; as assuredly it forms an example which few would have the power, and fewer still would find the will, to imitate. His seventy-five years, unbroken by any transient glance at this world's gaieties; his one hundred and sixty-eight volumes, where the fancy never once disports herself; a mortal man absorbed in the solemn realities, and absolutely independent of all the illusions, of life, appears like a fiction, and a dull one too. Yet it is an exact, and not an uninviting, truth.

Never was the alliance of soul and body formed on terms of greater inequality than in Baxter's person. It was like the compact in the fable, where all the spoils and honours fall to the giant's share, while the poor dwarf puts up with all the danger and the blows. The mournful list of his chronic diseases renders almost miraculous the mental vigour which bore him through exertions resembling those of a disembodied spirit. But his ailments were such as, without affecting his mental powers, gave repose to his animal appetites, and quenched the thirst for all the emoluments and honours of this sublunary state. Death, though delaying to strike, stood continually before him, ever quickening his attention to that awful presence, by approaching the victim under some new or varied aspect of disease. Under this influence he wrote, and spoke, and acted—a dying man, conversant with the living in all their pursuits, but taking no share in their transient hopes and fugitive emotions. Every returning day was welcomed and improved, as though it were to be his last. Each sermon which he delivered might not improbably be a farewell admonition to his audience. The sheets which lay before him were rapidly filled with the

first suggestions of his mind in the first words which offered; for to-morrow's sun might find him unable to complete the momentous task. All the graces and the negligences of composition were alike unheeded; for how labour as an artist when the voice of human applause might in a few short hours become inaudible!

In Baxter, the characteristics of his age, and of his associates, were thus heightened by the peculiarities of his own physical and mental constitution. Their earnestness passed in him into a profound solemnity; their diligence into an unrelaxing intensity of employment; their disinterestedness into a fixed disdain of the objects for which other men contend. Even the episode of his marriage is in harmony with the rest. He renounced the property with which it would have encumbered him, and stipulated for the absolute command of his precarious and inestimable time. Had this singular concentration of thought and purpose befallen a man of quick sympathies, it would have overborne his spirits, if it had not impaired his reason. But Baxter was naturally stern. Had it overtaken a man of excitable imagination, it would have engendered a troop of fantastic and extravagant day-dreams. But to Baxter's vision all the objects which fascinate ordinary observers, presented themselves with a hard outline, colourless, and with no surrounding atmosphere. Had it been united to a cold and selfish heart, the result would have been a life of ascetic fanaticism. But Baxter was animated by an enlarged, though a calm philanthropy. His mind, though never averted from the remembrance of his own and of others' eternal doom, was still her own sovereign; diligently examining the foundations, and determining the limits, of belief; methodising her opinions with painful accuracy, and expanding them

into all their theoretical or practical results, as patiently as ever analyst explored the depths of the differential calculus. Still every thing was practical and to the purpose. 'I have looked,' he says, 'over Hutton, Vives, Erasmus, Scaliger, Salmasius, Casaubon, and many other critical grammarians, and all Gruter's critical volumes. I have read almost all the physics and metaphysics I could hear of. I have wasted much of my time among loads of historians, chronologers, and antiquaries. I despise none of their learning—all truth is useful. Mathematics, which I have least of, I find a pretty and manlike sport; but if I had no other kind of knowledge than these, what were my understanding worth? What a dreaming dotard should I be!.. I have higher thoughts of the schoolmen than Erasmus and our other grammarians had. I much value the method and sobriety of Aquinas, the subtlety of Scotus and Ockam, the plainness of Durandus, the solidity of Ariminensis, the profundity of Bradwardine, the excellent acuteness of many of their followers; of Aureolus, Capreolus, Bannes, Alvarez, Zumel, &c.; of Mayro, Lychetus, Trombeta, Faber, Meurisse, Rada, &c.; of Ruiz, Pennattes, Saurez, Vasquez, &c.; of Hurtado, of Albertinus, of Lud à Dola, and many others. But how loth should I be to take such sauce for my food, and such recreations for my business! The jingling of too much and false philosophy among them often drowns the noise of Aaron's bells. I feel myself much better in Herbert's temple.'

Within the precincts of that temple, and to the melody of those bells, he accordingly proceeded to erect the vast monument of his theological works. Their basis was laid in a series of 'Aphorisms on Justification'—an attempt to fix the sense of the sacred volume on those topics which constitute the

essential peculiarities of the Christian system. The assaults with which the Aphorisms had been encountered were repelled by his 'Apology,' a large volume in quarto. The 'Apology' was, within a few months, reinforced by another quarto, entitled his 'Confession of Faith.' Between four and five hundred pages of 'Disputations' came to the succour of the 'Confession.' Then appeared four treatises on the 'Doctrine of Perseverance,' on 'Saving Faith,' on 'Justifying Righteousness,' and on 'Universal Redemption.' Next in order is a folio of seven hundred pages, entitled 'Catholic Theology, plain, pure, peaceable,' unfolding and resolving all the controversies of the Schoolmen, the Papists, and the Protestants. This was eclipsed by a still more ponderous folio in Latin, entitled, 'Methodus Theologiæ Christianæ,' composed, to quote his own words, 'in my retirement at Totteridge, in a troublesome, smoky, suffocating room, in the midst of daily pains of sciatica, and many worse.' After laying down the nature of Deity, and of things in general, he discloses all the relations, eternal and historical, between God and man, with all the abstract truths, and all the moral obligations, deducible from them; — detecting the universal presence of a Trinity, not in the Divine Being only, but in all things spiritual and material which flow from the great fountain of life. With another book, entitled 'An end of Doctrinal Controversies,' — a title, he observes, 'not intended as a prognostic, but as didactical and corrective' — terminated his efforts to close up the mighty questions which touch on man's highest hopes and interests. He had thrown upon them such an incredible multitude and variety of cross lights, as effectually to dazzle any intellectual vision less aquiline than his own.

His next enterprise was to win mankind to reli-

gious concord. A progeny of twelve books, most of them of considerable volume, attest his zeal in this arduous cause. Blessed, we are told, are the peace-makers; but the benediction is unaccompanied with the promise of tranquillity. He found, indeed, a patron in 'His Highness, Richard Lord Protector,' whose rule he acknowledged as lawful, though he had denied the authority of his father. Addressing that wise and amiable man, 'I observe,' he says, 'that the nation generally rejoice in your peaceable entrance upon the government. Many are persuaded that you have been strangely kept from participating in any of our late bloody contentions, that God might make you the healer of our breaches, and employ you in that temple work which David himself might not be honoured with, though it was in his mind, because he shed blood abundantly, and made great wars.'

Stronger minds, and less gentle hearts, than that of Richard repelled with natural indignation counsels which rebuked all the contending parties. Amongst these was 'one Malpas, an old scandalous minister.' 'and Edward Bagshawe, a young man who had written formerly against monarchy, and afterwards against Bishop Morley, and being of a resolute Roman spirit, was sent first to the Tower, and then lay in a horrid dungeon;' and who wrote a book 'full of untruths, which the furious temerarious man did utter out of the rashness of his mind.' In his dungeon, poor Bagshawe died, and Baxter closes the debate with tenderness and pathos. 'While we wrangle here in the dark, we are dying, and passing to the world that will decide all our controversies, and the safest passage thither is by peaceable holiness.' Dr. Owen, one of the foremost in the first rank of the divines of his age, had borne much; but these exhortations to concord he could not bear; and he taught his

monitor, that he who undertakes to reconcile enemies must be prepared for the loss of friends. It was on every account a desperate endeavour. Baxter was opposed to every sect, and belonged to none. He can be properly described only as a Baxterian — at once the founder and the single member of an eclectic school, within the portals of which he invited all men, but persuaded none, to take refuge from their mutual animosities.

Had Baxter been content merely to establish truth, and to decline the refutation of error, many might have listened to a voice so affectionate, and to counsels so profound. But 'while he spake to them of peace, he made him ready for battle.' Ten volumes, many of them full-grown quartos, vindicated his secession from the Church of England. Five other batteries, equally well served, were successively opened against the Antinomians, the Quakers, the Baptists, the Millenarians, and the Grotians. The last, of whom Dodwell was the leader, prefigured, in the reign of Charles, the divines who flourish at Oxford in the reign of Victoria. Long it were, and not very profitable, to record the events of these theological campaigns. They brought into the field Tillotson, Stillingfleet, and Dodwell. The men of learning were aided by the men of wit. Womack, the Bishop of St. David's, had incurred Baxter's censure for his 'abusive, virulent accusations' of the Synod of Dort, in a book which the Bishop had published under the name of 'Tilenus Junior.' To this attack appeared an answer, entitled 'The Examination of Tilenus before the Triers, in order to his intended settlement in the office of a public preacher in the commonwealth of Utopia.' Among the jurors empannelled for the trial of Tilenus, are 'Messrs. Absolute,' 'Fatality,' 'Preterition,' 'Narrow Grace, *alias* Stint Grace,' 'Take o' Trust,' 'Know Little,'

and 'Dubious,'—the last the established soubriquet for Richard Baxter.

But neither smile nor sigh could be extorted from the veteran polemic; nor, in truth, had he much right to be angry. If not with equal pleasantry, he had with at least equal freedom, invented appellations for his opponents;— designating Dodwell, or his system, as 'Leviathan, absolute destructive Prelacy, the son of Abaddon, Apollyon, and not of Jesus Christ.' Statesmen joined in the affray. Morice, Charles's first Secretary of State, contributed a treatise: and Lauderdale, who, with all his faults, was an accomplished scholar, and, amidst all his inconsistencies, a stanch Presbyterian, accepted the dedication of one of Baxter's controversial pieces, and presented him with twenty guineas. The unvarying kindness to the persecuted nonconformist of one who was himself a relentless persecutor, is less strange than the fact, that the future courtier of Charles read, during his imprisonment at Windsor, the whole of Baxter's then published works, and, as their grateful author records, remembered them better than himself. While the pens of the wise, the witty, and the great, were thus employed against the universal antagonist, the Quakers assailed him with their tongues. Who could recognise, in the gentle and benevolent people who now bear that name, a trace of their ancestral character, of which Baxter has left the following singular record? — 'The Quakers in their shops, when I go along London Streets, say, "Alas! poor man, thou art yet in darkness." They have oft come to the congregation, when I had liberty to preach Christ's gospel, and cried out against me as a deceiver of the people. They have followed me home, crying out in the streets, "the day of the Lord is coming, and thou shalt perish as a deceiver." They have stood

in the market-place, and under my window, year after year, crying to the people, "take heed of your priests, they deceive your souls;" and if any one wore a lace or neat clothing, they cried out to me, "these are the fruits of your ministry."'

Against the divorce of divinity and politics, Baxter vehemently protested, as the putting asunder of things which a sacred ordinance had joined together. He therefore published a large volume, entitled 'The Holy Commonwealth; a Plea for the cause of Monarchy, but as under God, the Universal Monarch.' Far better to have roused against himself all the quills which had ever bristled on all the 'fretful porcupines' of theological strife. For, while vindicating the ancient government of England, he hazarded a distinct avowal of opinions, which, with their patrons, were about to be proscribed with the return of the legitimate Sovereign. He taught that the laws of England are above the king; 'that Parliament was his highest court, where his personal will and word were not sufficient authority.' He vindicated the war against Charles, and explained the apostolical principle of obedience to the higher powers as extending to the senate as well as to the emperor. The royal power had been given 'for the common good, and no cause could warrant the king to make the commonwealth the party which he should exercise hostility against.'

All this was published at the moment of the fall of Richard Cromwell. Amidst the multitude of answers which it provoked may be especially noticed those of Harrington, the author of the 'Oceana,' and of Edward Pettit. 'The former,' says Baxter, 'seemed in a Bethlehem rage, for, by way of scorn, he printed half a sheet of foolish jests, in such words as idiots or drunkards use, railing at ministers as a pack of fools and knaves, and, by his gibberish derision, persuading men that

we deserve no other answer than such scorn and nonsense as beseemeth fools. With most insolent pride, he carried it as neither I nor any ministers understood at all what policy was; but prated against we knew not what, and had presumed to speak against other men's art, which he was master of, and his knowledge, to such idiots as we, incomprehensible.'

Pettit places Baxter in hell, where Bradshawe acts as President of an infernal tribunal, and Hobbes and Neville strive in vain to obtain from his adjudication the crown for pre-eminence of evil and mischief on earth; which he awards to the Nonconformist. 'Let him come in,' exclaims the new Rhadamanthus, 'and be crowned with wreaths of serpents and chaplets of adders. Let his triumphant chariot be a pulpit drawn on the wheels of cannon by a brace of wolves in sheep's clothing. Let the ancient fathers of the Church, whom out of ignorance he has vilified; the reverend and learned prelates, whom out of pride and malice he has belied, abused, and persecuted; the most righteous King, whose murder he has justified — let them all be bound in chains to attend his infernal triumph to his "Saint's Everlasting Rest;" then make room, scribes and pharisees, hypocrites, atheists, and politicians, for the greatest rebel on earth, and next to him that fell from heaven.'

Nor was this all. The 'Holy Commonwealth' was amongst the books which the University of Oxford sentenced to the flames which, in a former generation, had been less innocently kindled at the same place, against the persons of men who had dared to proclaim unwelcome truths. Morley, and many others, branded it as treason; and the King was taught to regard the author as one of the most inveterate enemies of the royal authority. South joined in the universal clamour; and Baxter, in his

autobiography, records, that when that great wit and author had been called to preach before the King, and a vast congregation drawn together by his high celebrity, he was compelled, after a quarter of an hour, to desist and to retire from the pulpit, exclaiming, 'the Lord be merciful to our infirmities!' The sermon, which should have been recited, was afterwards published, and it appeared that the passage at which South's presence of mind had failed him, was an invective against the 'Holy Commonwealth'!

After enduring for ten years the storm which his book had provoked, Baxter took the very singular course of publishing a revocation, desiring the world to consider it as *non scriptum*; — maintaining, nevertheless, the general principles of his work, and 'protesting against the judgment of Posterity, and all others that were not of the same time and place, as to the mental censure either of the book or revocation, as being ignorant of the true reasons of them both.' We of this age, therefore, who, for the present, constitute the Posterity, against whose rash judgment this protest was entered, must be wary in censuring what, it must be confessed, is not very intelligible; except, indeed, as it is not difficult to perceive, that he had motives enough for retreating from an unprofitable strife, even though the retreat could not be very skilfully accomplished.

Two volumes of Ecclesiastical History, the first a quarto of five hundred pages, the second a less voluminous vindication of its predecessor, attest the extent of Baxter's labours in this department of theological literature, and the stupendous compass of his reading. The authorities he enumerates, and from a diligent study of which his work is drawn, would form a considerable library.

Such labours as those we have mentioned, might seem to have left no vacant space in a life otherwise so actively employed. But these books, and the vast mass of unpublished manuscripts, are not the most extensive, as they are incomparably the least valuable, of the produce of his solitary hours.

With the exception of Grotius, Baxter is the earliest of that long series of eminent writers who have undertaken to establish the truth of Christianity, by a systematic exhibition of the evidence and the arguments in favour of the divine origin of our faith. All homage to their cause, for we devoutly believe it to be the cause of truth! Be it acknowledged that their labours could not have been declined, without yielding a temporary and dangerous triumph to sophistry and presumptuous ignorance. Admit (as indeed it is scarcely possible to exaggerate) their boundless superiority to their antagonists in learning, in good faith, in sagacity, in range and in depth of thought, and in whatever else was requisite in this momentous controversy; — concede, as for ourselves we delight to confess, that they have advanced their proofs to the utmost heights of probability which by such reasonings it is possible to scale ;—and yet with all these concessions may not inconsistently be combined some distaste for these inquiries, and some doubt of their real value.

The sacred writers have none of the timidity of their modern apologists. They never sue for an assent to their doctrines, but authoritatively command the acceptance of them. They denounce unbelief as guilt, and insist on faith as a virtue of the highest order. In their Catholic invitations, the intellectual not less than the social distinctions of mankind are unheeded. Every student of their writings is aware of these facts; but the solution

of them is less commonly observed. It is, we apprehend, that the Apostolic authors assume the existence in all men of a 'Spiritual Discernment,' enabling the mind, when unclouded by appetite or passion, to recognise and distinguish the Divine voice, whether uttered from within by the intimations of conscience, or speaking from without in the language of inspired oracles. They presuppose that vigour of reason may consist with feebleness of understanding; and that the power of discriminating between religious truth and error, does not chiefly depend on the culture or on the exercise of the mere argumentative faculty. The especial patrimony of the poor and the illiterate, the Gospel has been the stay of countless millions who never framed a syllogism. Of the great multitudes whom no man can number, who, before and since the birth of Grotius, have lived in the peace, and died in the consolations, of our faith, how incomparably few are they whose conviction have been derived from the study of works like his! Of the numbers who have addicted themselves to such studies, how small is the proportion of those who have brought to the task either learning, or leisure, or industry sufficient to enable them to form an independent judgment on the questions in debate! Called to the exercise of a judicial function for which he is but ill prepared — addressed by pleadings on an issue where his prepossessions are all but unalterable, — bidden to examine evidences which he has most rarely the skill, the learning, or the leisure to verify, — and pressed by arguments, sometimes overstrained, and sometimes fallacious — he who lays the foundations of his faith in such 'evidences,' will but too commonly end either in yielding a credulous, and therefore an infirm, assent, or by reposing in a self-sufficient, and far more hazardous, incredulity.

For these reasons, we attach less value to the long series of Baxter's works in support of the foundations of the Christian faith, than to the rest of his books which have floated in safety down the tide of time to the present day. Yet it would be difficult to select from the same class of writings, any more eminently distinguished by the earnest love and the fearless pursuit of truth; or to name an inquirer into these subjects who possessed, and exercised, to a greater extent the power of suspending his long cherished opinions, and of closely interrogating every doubt by which they were obstructed.

In his solicitude to sustain the conclusions he had so laboriously formed, Baxter unhappily invoked the aid of arguments, which, however impressive in his own days, are answered in ours by a smile, if not by a sneer. The sneer, however, would be at once unmerited and unwise. When Hale was adjudging witches to death, and More preaching against their guilt, and Boyle investigating the sources of their power, it is not surprising that Baxter availed himself of the evidence afforded by witchcraft and apparitions in proof of the existence of a world of spirits; and therefore in support of one of the fundamental tenets of revealed religion. Marvellous, however, it is, in running over his historical discourse on that subject, to find him giving so unhesitating an assent to the long list of extravagances and nursery tales which he has there brought together; unsupported, as they almost all are, by any proof that such facts occurred at all, or by any decorous pretext for referring them to preternatural agency.

Simon Jones, a stout-hearted and able-bodied soldier, standing sentinel at Worcester, was driven away from his post by the appearance of something like a head-

less bear. A drunkard was warned against intemperance by the lifting up of his shoes by an invisible hand. One of the witches condemned by Hale threw a girl into fits. Mr. Emlin, a bystander, 'suddenly felt a force pull one of the hooks from his breeches, and, while he looked with wonder what was become of it, the tormented girl vomited it up out of her mouth.' At the house of Mr. Beecham, there was a tobacco pipe which had the habit of 'moving itself from a shelf at one end of the room, to a shelf at the other end of the room.' When Mr. Munn, the minister, went to witness the prodigy, the tobacco pipe remained stationary; but a great Bible made a spontaneous leap into his lap, and opened itself at a passage, on the hearing of which the evil spirit who had possessed the pipe was exorcised. 'This Mr. Munn himself told me, when in the sickness year, 1665, I lived in Stockerson Hall. I have no reason to suspect the veracity of a sober man, a constant preacher, and a good scholar.'

Baxter was credulous and incredulous for precisely the same reason. Possessing, by long habit, a mastery over his thoughts, such as few other men ever acquired, a single effort of the will was sufficient to exclude from his view whatever recollections he judged hostile to his immediate purpose. Every prejudice was at once banished when any debatable point was to be scrutinised; and, with equal facility, every reasonable doubt was exiled when his only object was to enforce or to illustrate a doctrine of the truth of which he was assured. The perfect submission of the will to the reason may belong to some higher state of being than ours. On mortal man that gift is not bestowed. In the best and the wisest, inclination will often grasp the reins by which she ought to be guided,

and misdirect the judgment which she should obey. Happy they, who, like Baxter, have so disciplined the affections, as to disarm their temporary usurpation of all its more dangerous tendencies!

Controversies are ephemeral. Ethics, metaphysics, and political philosophy are doomed to an early death, unless when born of genius and nurtured by intense and self-denying industry. Even the theologians of one age must, alas! too often disappear to make way for those of later times. But if there is an exception to the general decree which consigns man and his intellectual offspring to the same dull forgetfulness, it is in favour of such writings as those which fill the four folio volumes bearing the title of 'Baxter's Practical Works.' Their appearance in twenty-three smart octavos is nothing short of a profanation. Hew down the Pyramids into a range of streets! divide Niagara into a succession of water privileges! but let not the spirits of the mighty dead be thus evoked from their majestic shrines to animate the dwarfish structures of our bookselling generation.

Deposit one of those grey folios on a resting-place equal to that venerable burden, then call up the patient and serious thoughts which its very aspect should inspire, and confess that, among the writings of uninspired men, there are none better fitted to awaken, to invigorate, to enlarge, or to console the mind, which can raise itself to such celestial colloquy. True, they abound in undistinguishable distinctions; the current of emotion, when flowing most freely, is but too often obstructed by metaphysical rocks and shallows, or diverted from its course into some dialectic winding; one while the argument is obscured by fervent expostulation; at another the passion is dried up by the analysis of the ten thousand springs

of which it is compounded; here is a maze of subtleties to be unravelled, and there a crowd of the obscurely learned to be refuted; the unbroken solemnity may now and then shed some gloom on the traveller's path, and the length of the way may occasionally entice him to slumber. But where else can be found an exhibition, at once so vivid and so chaste, of the diseases of the human heart — a detection so fearfully exact, of the sophistries of which we are first the voluntary, and then the unconscious, victims — a light thrown with such intensity on the madness and the woe of every departure from the rules of virtue—a development of those rules at once so comprehensive and so elevated — counsels more shrewd or more persuasive — or a proclamation more consolatory of the resources provided by Christianity for escaping the dangers by which we are surrounded, of the eternal rewards she promises, or of the temporal blessings she imparts, as an earnest and a foretaste of them?

'*Largior hic campis æther.*' Charles, and Laud, and Cromwell are forgotten. We have no more to do with anti-pædobaptism or prelacy. L'Estrange and Morley disturb not this higher region; but man, and his noblest pursuits — Deity, in the highest conceptions of his attributes which can be extracted from the poor materials of human thought — the world we inhabit, divested of the illusions which ensnare us — the world to which we look forward, bright with the choicest colours of hope—the glorious witnesses, and the Divine Example and the Divine Supporter of our conflict — throng, and animate, and inform every crowded page. In this boundless repository, the intimations of inspired wisdom are pursued into all their bearings on the various conditions and exigencies of life, with a fertility which would inundate and overpower the most reten-

tive mind, had it not been balanced by a method and a discrimination even painfully elaborate. Through the vast accumulation of topics, admonitions, and inquiries, the love of truth is universally conspicuous. To every precept is appended the limitations it seems to demand. No difficulty is evaded. Dogmatism is never permitted to usurp the province of argument. Each equivocal term is curiously defined, and each plausible doubt narrowly examined. Not content to explain the results he has reached, he exhibits the process by which they were excogitated, and lays open all the secrets of his mental laboratory. And a wondrous spectacle it is. Calling to his aid an extent of theological and scholastic lore sufficient to equip a whole college of divines, and moving beneath the load with unencumbered freedom, he expatiates and rejoices in all the intricacies of his way — now plunging into the deepest thickets of casuistic and psychological speculation — and then emerging from them to resume his chosen task of probing the conscience, by remonstrances from which there is no escape — or of quickening the sluggish feelings, by strains of devotion in which it is impossible not to join.

That expostulations and arguments of which almost all admit the justice, and the truth of which none can disprove, should fall so ineffectually on the ear, and should so seldom reach the heart, is a phenomenon worthy of more than a passing notice, and meriting an inquiry of greater exactness than it usually receives even from those who profess the art of healing our spiritual maladies. To resolve it 'into the corruption of human nature,' is but to change the formula in which the difficulty is proposed. To affirm that a corrupt nature always gives an undue preponderance to the present above the future, is untrue in fact; for

some of our worst passions — avarice, for example, revenge, ambition, and the like — chiefly manifest their power in the utter disregard of immediate privations and sufferings, with a view to a supposed remote advantage. To represent the world as generally incredulous as to the reality of a retributive state, is to contradict universal experience, which shows how firmly that persuasion is incorporated with the language, habits, and thoughts of mankind; — manifesting itself most distinctly in those great exigencies of life, when disguise is the least practicable. To refer to an external spiritual agency, determining the will to a wise or a foolish choice, is only to reproduce the original question in another form — what is that structure or mechanism of the human mind by means of which such influences operate to control or to guide our volitions?

The best we can throw out as an answer to the problem is, that the constitution of our frames, partly sensitive and partly rational, and, corresponding with this, the condition of our sublunary existence, pressed by animal as well as by spiritual wants, condemns us to a constant oscillation between the sensual and the divine, between the propensities which we share with the brute creation, and the aspirations which connect us with the Author of our being. The rational soul contemplates means only in reference to their ends; whilst the sensuous nature reposes in means alone, and looks no further. Imagination, alternately the ally of each, most readily lends her powerful aid to the ignobler party. Her golden hues are more easily employed to exalt and refine the grossness of appetite, than to impart brilliancy and allurement to objects brought within the sphere of human vision by the exercise of faith and hope. Her draperies are ad-

justed with greater facility to clothe the nakedness and to conceal the shame of those things with which she is most conversant, than to embellish the forms and add grace to the proportions of things obscurely disclosed at few and transient intervals.

It is with this formidable alliance of Sense and Imagination that Religion has to contend. Her aim is to win over to her side that all-powerful mental faculty which usually takes part with her antagonist, and thus to shed over each of our steps the colours borrowed from its ultimate, as contrasted with its immediate, tendency; to teach us to regard the pleasures and the pains of our mortal state in the light in which we shall view them in our immortal existence; to make things hateful or lovely now, according as they impede or promote our welfare hereafter. He is a religious, or, in the appropriate language of theology, a 'regenerate' man, who, trained to this discipline, habitually transfers to the means he employs the aversion or the attachment due to the end he contemplates; who discerns and loathes the poison in the otherwise tempting cup of unhallowed indulgence, and perceives and loves the medicinal balm in the otherwise bitter draught of hardy self-denial. Good Richard Baxter erected his four folio volumes as a dam with which to stay this confluent flood of sense and imagination, and to turn aside the waters into a more peaceful and salutary channel. When the force of the torrent is correctly estimated, it is more reasonable to wonder that he and his fellow-labourers have succeeded so well, than that their success has been no greater.

On his style as an author, Baxter himself is the best critic. 'The commonness and the greatness of men's necessity,' he says, 'commanded me to do any

thing that I could for their relief, and to bring forth some water to cast upon this fire, though I had not at hand a silver vessel to carry it in, nor thought it the most fit. The plainest words are the most profitable oratory in the weightiest matters. Fineness for ornament, and delicacy for delight; but they answer not necessity, though sometimes they may modestly attend that which answers it.' He wrote to give utterance to a full mind and a teeming spirit. Probably he never consumed forty minutes in as many years in the mere selection and adjustment of words. So to have employed his time, would in his judgment have been a sinful waste of that precious gift. 'I thought to have acquainted the world with nothing but what was the work of time and diligence, but my conscience soon told me that there was too much of pride and selfishness in this, and that humility and self-denial required me to lay by the affectation of that style, and spare that industry, which tended but to advance my name with men, when it hindered the main work and crossed my end.' Such is his own account; and, had he consulted Quinctilian, he could have found no better precept for writing well than that which his conscience gave him for writing usefully. The first of all the requisites for excelling in the art of composition is, as one of the greatest masters of that art in modern times (Sir Walter Scott) informs us, 'to have something to say.' When there are thoughts that burn, there never will be wanting words that breathe. Baxter's language is plain and perspicuous when his object is merely to inform; copious and flowing when he exhorts; and when he yields to the current of his feelings, it becomes redundant and impassioned, and occasionally picturesque and graphic. There are in-

numerable passages of the most touching pathos and unconscious eloquence, but not a single sentence written for effect. His chief merit as an artist is, that he is perfectly artless; and that he employs a style of great compass and flexibility, in such a manner as to demonstrate that he never thought about it, and as to prevent the reader, so long at least as he is reading, from thinking about it either.

The canons of criticism, which the great Nonconformist drew from his conscience, are, however, sadly inapplicable to verse. Mr. James Montgomery has given his high suffrage in favour of Baxter's poetical powers, and justifies his praise by a few passages selected from the rest with equal tenderness and discretion. It is impossible to subscribe to this heresy even in deference to such an authority; or to resist the suspicion that the piety of the critic has played false with his judgment. Nothing short of an actual and plenary inspiration will enable any man who composes as rapidly as he writes, to give meet utterance to those ultimate secretions of the deepest thoughts and the purest feelings in which the essence of poetry consists. Most of Baxter's verses, which however are not very numerous, would be decidedly improved by being shorn of their rhyme and rhythm, in which state they would look like very devout and judicious prose; as they really are.

Every man must and will have some relief from his more severe pursuits. His faithful pen attended Baxter in his pastime as in his studies; and produced an autobiography, which appeared after his death in a large folio volume. Calamy desired to throw these posthumous sheets into the editorial crucible, and to reproduce them in the form of a corrected and well-arranged abridgment. Mr. Orme

laments the obstinacy of the author's literary executor, which forbade the execution of this design. Few who know the book will agree with him. A strange chaos indeed it is. But Grainger has well said of the writer, that 'men of his size are not to be drawn in miniature.' Large as life, and finished to the most minute detail, his own portrait, from his own hand, exhibits to the curious in such things a delineation, of which they would not willingly spare a single stroke, and which would have lost all its force and freedom if reduced and varnished by any other limner, however practised, or however felicitous.

There he stands, an intellectual giant as he was, playing with his quill as Hercules with the distaff, his very sport a labour under which any one but himself would have staggered. Towards the close of the first book occurs a passage, which, though often republished, and familiar to most students of English literature, must yet be noticed as the most impressive record in our own language, if not in any tongue, of the gradual ripening of a powerful mind under the culture of incessant study, wide experience, and anxious self-observation. Mental anatomy, conducted by a hand at once so delicate and so firm, and comparisons, so exquisitely just, between the impressions and impulses of youth and the tranquil conclusions of old age, bring his career of strife and trouble to a close of unexpected and welcome serenity. In the full maturity of such knowledge as is to be acquired on earth of the mysteries of our mortal and of our immortal existence, the old man returns at last for repose to the elementary truths, the simple lessons, and the confiding affections of his childhood; and writes an unintended commentary, of unrivalled force and beauty, on the inspired declaration, that to 'be-

come as little children' is the indispensable, though arduous, condition of attaining to true heavenly wisdom.

To substitute for this self-portraiture, any other analysis of Baxter's intellectual and moral character would indeed be a vain attempt. If there be any defect or error of which he was unconscious, and which he therefore has not avowed, it was the combination in his mind of an undue reliance on his own powers of investigating truth, with an undue distrust in the result of his inquiries. He proposed to himself, and executed, the task of exploring the whole circle of the moral sciences, logic, ethics, divinity, politics, and metaphysics; and this toil he accomplished amidst public employments of ceaseless importunity, and bodily pains almost unintermitted. Intemperance never assumed a more venial form; but that this insatiate thirst for knowledge was indulged to a faulty excess, no reader of his life, or of his works, can doubt.

In one of his most remarkable treatises 'On Falsely Pretended Knowledge,' the dangerous result of indulging this omnivorous appetite is peculiarly remarkable. Probabilities, the only objects of such studies, will at length become evanescent, or scarcely perceptible, when he who holds the scales refuses to adjust the balance, until satisfied that he has laden each with every suggestion and every argument which can be derived from every author who has preceded him in the same inquiries. Yet more hopeless is the search for truth, when this adjustment, after having been once made, is again to be verified as often as any new speculations are discovered; and when the very faculty of human understanding, and the laws of reasoning, are themselves to be questioned and ex-

amined anew as frequently as any doubt can be raised of their adaptation to their appointed ends. Busied with this immense apparatus, and applying it to this boundless field of inquiry, Baxter would have been bewildered by his own efforts, and lost in the mazes of an universal scepticism, but for the ardent piety which possessed his soul, and the ever recurring expectation of approaching death, which dissipated his ontological dreams, and roused him to the active duties, and the instant realities of life. Even as it is, he has left behind him much, which, in direct opposition to his own purposes, might cherish the belief that human existence was some strange chimera, and human knowledge an illusion, did it not fortunately happen that he is tedious in proportion as he is mystical. Had he possessed and employed the wit and gaiety of Bayle, there are some of his writings to which a place must have been assigned in the *Index Expurgatorius* of Protestantism.

Amongst his contemporaries, Baxter appears to have been the object of general reverence, and of as general unpopularity. His temper was austere and irritable, his address ungracious and uncouth. While cordially admitting the merits of each rival sect, he concurred with none, but was the common censor and opponent of all. His own opinions on church government coincided with the later judgment, or, as it should be rather said, with the concessions, of Archbishop Usher. They adjusted the whole of that interminable dispute to their mutual satisfaction at a conference which did not last above half an hour; for each of them was too devoutly intent on the great objects of Christianity to differ with each other very widely as to mere ritual observances. The contentions by which our forefathers were agitated on these

subjects, have now happily subsided into a speculative and comparatively uninteresting debate. They produced their best, and perhaps their only desirable result, in diffusing through the Church, and amongst the people, of England, an indestructible conviction of the folly of attempting to coerce the human mind into a servitude to any system or profession of belief; or of endeavouring to produce amongst men any real uniformity of opinion on subjects beyond the cognisance of the bodily senses, and of daily observation. They have taught us all to acknowledge in practice, though some may yet deny in theory, that as long as men are permitted to avow the truth, the inherent diversities of their understandings, and of their circumstances, must impel them to the acknowledgment of corresponding variations of judgment, on all questions which touch the mysteries of the present, or of the future, life. If no man laboured more, or with less success, to induce mankind to think alike on these topics, no one ever exerted himself more zealously, or more effectually, than did Richard Baxter, both by his life and his writings, to divert the world from those petty disputes which falsely assume the garb of religious zeal, to those eternal and momentous truths, in the knowledge, the love, and the practice of which, the essence of religion consists.

One word respecting the edition of his works, to which we referred in the outset. For the reason already mentioned, we have stuck to our long-revered folios, without reading so much as a page of their diminutive representatives, and can therefore report nothing about them. But after diligently and repeatedly reading the two introductory volumes by Mr. Orme, we rejoice in the opportunity of bearing testimony to the merits of a learned, modest, and

laborious writer, who is now, however, beyond the reach of human praise or censure. He has done every thing for Baxter's memory which could be accomplished by a skilful abridgment of his autobiography, and a careful analysis of the theological library of which he was the author; aided by an acquaintance with the theological literature of the seventeenth century, such as no man but himself has exhibited, and which it may safely be conjectured no other man possesses. Had Mr. Orme been a member of the Established Church, and had he chosen a topic more in harmony with the studies of that learned body, his literary abilities would have been far more correctly estimated, and more widely celebrated. They who dissent from her communion, and who are therefore excluded from her universities and her literary circles, are not, however, to expect for their writings the same toleration which is so firmly secured for their persons and their ministry. But let them not be dejected. Let them take for their examples those whom they have selected as their teachers; and learning from Richard Baxter to live and to write, they will either achieve his celebrity, or will be content, as he was, to labour without any other recompense than the tranquillity of his own conscience, the love of the people among whom he dwelt, and the approbation of the Master to whom every hour of his life, and every page of his books, were alike devoted.

THE "EVANGELICAL" SUCCESSION.

If the enemies of Christianity in the commencement of the last century failed to accomplish its overthrow, they were at least successful in producing what at present appears to have been a strange and unreasonable panic. Middleton, Bolingbroke, and Mandeville, have now lost their terrors; and Chubb, Toland, Collins, and Woolston, are remembered, like the heroes of the Dunciad, only on account of the brilliancy of the *Auto-da-fé* at which they suffered. To these writers, however, belongs the credit of having suggested to Clarke his inquiries into the elementary truth on which all religion depends. By them Warburton was provoked to 'demonstrate' the Divine legation of Moses. They excited Bishop Newton to show the fulfilment of Prophecy, and Lardner to accumulate the proofs of the Credibility of the Gospels. A greater than any of these, Joseph Butler, was induced, by the same adversaries, to investigate the analogy of natural and revealed religion; and Berkeley and Sherlock, with a long catalogue of more obscure writers, crowded to the defence of the menaced citadel of the Faith. But in this anxiety to strengthen their ramparts the garrison not only declined to attempt new conquests, but withdrew from much of their ancient dominion. In this its apologetic age, English Theology was distinguished by an un-

wonted timidity and coldness. There was an end of the alliance which it had maintained from the days of Jewell to those of Leighton, with philosophy and eloquence, with wit and poetry. Taylor and Hall, Donne and Hooker, Baxter and Howe, had spoken as men having authority, and with an unclouded faith in their Divine Mission. In that confidence they had grappled with every difficulty, and had wielded with equal ease and vigour all the resources of genius and of learning. Alternately searching the depths of the heart, and playing over the mere surface of the mind, they relieved the subtleties of logic by a quibble, or a pun, and illuminated, by intense flashes of wit, the metaphysical abysses which it was their delight to tread. Even when directing the spiritual affections to their highest exercise, they hazarded any quaint conceit which crossed their path, and gave way to every impulse of fancy or of passion. But Divinity was no longer to retain the foremost place in English literature. The Tillotsons and Seckers of a later age were alike distrustful of their readers and of themselves. Tame, cautious, and correct, they rose above the Tatlers and Spectators of their times, because on such themes as theirs it was impossible to be frivolous; but they can hardly be said to have contributed as largely as Steele and Addison to guide the opinions, or to form the character of their generation.

This depression of theology was aided by the state of political parties under the two first princes of the House of Brunswick. Low and High Church were but other names for Whigs and Tories; and while Hoadley and Atterbury wrangled about the principles of the Revolution, the sacred subjects which formed the pretext of their disputes were desecrated

in the feelings of the multitude, who witnessed and enjoyed the controversy. Secure from further persecution, and deeply attached to the new order of things, the Dissenters were no longer roused to religious zeal by invidious secular distinctions; and Doddridge and Watts lamented the decline of their congregations from the standard of their ancient piety. The former victims of bigotry had become its proselytes, and joined in directing anathemas against the Pope and the Pretender, with still greater acrimony than against the Evil One, with whom good Protestants of all denominations associated them.

The theology of any age at once ascertains and regulates its moral stature; and, at the period of which we speak, the austere virtues of the Puritans, and the more meek and social, though not less devout, spirit of the Worthies of the Church of England, if still to be detected in the recesses of private life, were discountenanced by the general habits of society. The departure of the more pure and generous influences of earlier times may be traced nowhere more clearly than in those works of fiction, in which the prevailing profligacy of manners was illustrated by Fielding, Sterne, and Smollett; and proved, though with more honest purposes, by Richardson and Defoe.

It was at this period that the *Alma Mater* of Laud and Sacheverel was nourishing in her bosom a little band of pupils, destined to accomplish a momentous revolution in the national character. Wesley had already attained the dawn of manhood, when, in 1714, his future rival and coadjutor, George Whitfield, was born at a tavern in Gloucester, of which his father was the host. The death of the elder Whitfield within two years from that time, left the child to the

care of his mother, who took upon herself the management of the 'Bell Inn;' though, as her son has gratefully recorded, she 'prudently kept him, in his tender years, from intermeddling with the tavern business.' In such a situation he almost inevitably fell into vices and follies, which have been exaggerated as much by the vehemence of his own confessions, as by the malignity of his enemies. They exhibit some curious indications of his future character. He filched his mother's purse, but gave part of the money to the poor. He stole books, but they were books of devotion. Irritated by the unlucky tricks of his playfellows, who, he says, in the language of David, 'compassed him about like bees,' he converted into a prayer the prophetic imprecation of the Psalmist—'In the name of the Lord I will destroy them.' The mind in which bad passions and devotional feelings were thus strongly knit together, was consigned, in early youth, to the culture of the master of the grammar-school of St. Mary de Crypt, in his native city; and there were given the first indications of his future eminence. He studied the English dramatic writers, and represented their female characters with applause; and when the mayor and aldermen were to be harangued by one of the scholars, the embryo field-preacher was selected to extol the merits, and to gratify the taste, of their worships. His erratic propensities were developed almost as soon as his powers of elocution. Wearied with the studies of the grammar-school, he extorted his mother's reluctant consent to return to the tavern; and there, he says, 'I put on my blue apron and my snuffers, washed mops, cleaned rooms, and, in one word, became professed and common Drawer for nigh a year and a half.' The Tapster was, of course, occasionally tipsy, and always in re-

quest; but as even the flow of the tap may not be perennial, he found leisure to compose sermons, and stole from the night some hours for the study of the Bible.

At the Bell Inn there dwelt a sister-in-law of Whitfield's, with whom it was his fortune or his fault to quarrel; and to soothe his troubled spirit he 'would retire and weep before the Lord, as Hagar when flying from Sarah.' From the presence of this Sarah he accordingly fled to Bristol, and betook himself to the study of Thomas à Kempis; but returning once more to Gloucester, first exchanged Divinity for the drama, and then abandoned the dramatists for his long neglected school-books. For now had opened a prospect inviting him to the worthy use of those talents which might otherwise have been consumed either in sordid occupations, or in some obscure and fruitless efforts to assert his native superiority to ordinary men. Intelligence had reached his mother that admission might be obtained at Pembroke College, Oxford, for her capricious and thoughtful boy; and the intuitive wisdom of a mother's love assured her that through this avenue he might advance to distinction, if not to fortune. A few more oscillations between dissolute tastes and heavenward desires, and the youth finally gained the mastery over his lower appetites. From his seventeenth year to his dying day he lived amongst embittered enemies and jealous friends, without a stain on his reputation.

In 1731 the gates of Pembroke College had finally closed on the rude figure of one of her illustrious sons, expelled by poverty to seek a precarious subsistence, and to earn a lasting reputation, in the obscure alleys of London. In the following year

they were opened to a pupil as ill provided with this world's wealth as Samuel Johnson, but destined to acquire a still more extensive and a more enduring celebrity. The waiter at the Bell Inn had become a servitor at Oxford — no great advancement in the social scale, according to the habits of that age — yet a change which conferred the means of elevation on a mind too ardent to leave any such advantage unimproved. He became the associate of Charles, and the disciple of John Wesley, who had at that time taken as their spiritual guide the celebrated mystic, William Law. These future chiefs of a religious revolution were then 'interrogating themselves whether they had been simple and collected; whether they had prayed with fervour Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, and on Saturday noon; if they had used a collect at nine, twelve, and three o'clock; duly meditated on Sunday from three to four on Thomas à Kempis; or mused on Wednesday and Friday from twelve to one on the Passion.'

But Quietism, indigenous in the East, is an exotic in this cold and busy land of ours, bearing at the best but sorry fruit, and hastening to a premature decay. Never was mortal man less fitted for the contemplative state than George Whitfield. It was an attempt as hopeful as that of converting a balloon into an observatory. He dressed the character indeed to admiration, for 'he thought it unbecoming a penitent to have his hair powdered, and wore woollen gloves, a patched gown, and dirty shoes.' But the sublime abstractions which should people the cell and haunt the spirit of the hermit he wooed in vain. In the hopeless attempt to do nothing but meditate, 'the power of meditating or even thinking was,' he says, 'taken from him.' Castanza on the

'Spiritual Combat' advised him to talk but little; and 'Satan said he must not talk at all.' The Divine Redeemer had been surrounded in his temptations by deserts and wild beasts, and to approach this example as closely as the localities allowed, Whitfield was accustomed to select Christ Church Meadow as the scene, and a stormy night as the time, of his mental conflicts. He prostrated his body on the bare earth, fasted during Lent, and exposed himself to the cold till his hands began to blacken, and 'by abstinence and inward struggles so emaciated his body as to be scarcely able to creep up stairs.' In this deplorable state he received from the Wesleys books and ghostly counsels. His tutor, more wisely, sent him a physician, and for seven weeks he laboured under a severe illness. It was, in his own language, 'a glorious visitation.' It gave him time and composure to make a written record and a penitent confession of his youthful sins; to examine the New Testament; to read Bishop Hall's Contemplations; and to seek by prayer for wisdom and for peace. The blessings thus invoked were not denied. 'The day-star,' he says, 'arose in my heart. The spirit of mourning was taken from me. For some time I could not avoid singing Psalms wherever I was, but my joy became gradually more settled. Thus were the days of my mourning ended.'

And thus also was ended his education. Before the completion of his twenty-first year, Whitfield returned to Gloucester; and such was the fame of his piety and talents, that Dr. Benson, the then Bishop of the Diocese, offered to dispense, in his favour, with the rule which forbade the ordination of Deacons at so unripe an age. The mental agitation

which preceded his acceptance of this proposal, is described in these strange but graphic terms in one of his latest sermons.

'I never prayed against any corruption I had in my life, so much as I did against going into holy orders so soon as my friends were for having me go. Bishop Benson was pleased to honour me with peculiar friendship, so as to offer me preferment, or to do any thing for me. My friends wanted me to mount the Church betimes. They wanted me to knock my head against the pulpit too young; but how some young men stand up here and there and preach I do not know. However it be to them, God knows how deep a concern entering into the ministry and preaching was to me. I have prayed a thousand times, till the sweat has dropped from my face like rain, that God of his infinite mercy would not let me enter the Church till he called me to and thrust me forth in his work. I remember once in Gloucester, I know the room—I look up to the window when I am there, and walk along the street—I know the window upon which I have laid prostrate. I said, Lord, I cannot go, I shall be puffed up with pride, and fall into the condemnation of the Devil. Lord, do not let me go yet. I pleaded to be at Oxford two or three years more. I intended to make 150 sermons, and thought that I would set up with a good stock in trade. I remember praying, wrestling, and striving with God. I said, I am undone. I am unfit to preach in thy great name. Send me not, Lord—send me not yet. I wrote to all my friends in town and country to pray against the Bishop's solicitation, but they insisted I should go into orders before I was twenty-two. After all their solicitations, these words came into my mind, "Nothing shall

pluck you out of my hands;" they came warm to my heart. Then, and not till then, I said, Lord, I *will* go; send me when thou wilt.' He was ordained accordingly; and 'when the Bishop laid his hands upon my head, my heart,' he says, 'was melted down, and I offered up my whole spirit, soul, and body.'

A man within whose bosom resides an oracle directing his steps in the language and with the authority of inspiration, had needs be thus self-devoted, in soul and body, to some honest purpose. If not, he will but too often mistake the voice of the Pythoness for that which issues from the sanctuary. But the uprightness and inflexible constancy of Whitfield's character rendered even its superstitions comparatively harmless; and the sortilege was ever in favour of some new effort to accomplish the single object for which he henceforward lived.

The next words which 'came to his soul with power' were, 'Speak out, Paul,' and never was injunction more strictly obeyed. 'Immediately,' he says, 'my heart was enlarged, and I preached on the Sunday morning to a very crowded audience with as much freedom as if I had been a preacher for some years. As I proceeded I perceived the fire kindled, till at last, though so young, and amidst a crowd of those who knew me in my infant childish days, I trust I was enabled to speak with some degree of gospel authority. Some few mocked, but most for the present seemed struck, and I have heard since that a complaint had been made to the Bishop that I drove fifteen mad by the first sermon. The worthy Prelate, as I am informed, wished that the madness might not be forgotten before next Sunday.'

Thus early conscious of his own rare powers, delighting in the exercise of them, charmed with the

admiration which they excited, and exulting in the belief that he had been commissioned from on high to quicken a torpid generation into life, he was urged into exertions which, if not attested by irrefragable proofs, might appear incredible and fabulous. It was the statement of one who knew him well, and who was incapable of wilful exaggeration — and it is confirmed by his letters, his journals, and a whole cloud of witnesses — that, 'in the compass of a single week, and that for years, he spoke in general forty hours, and in very many sixty, and that to thousands; and after his labours, instead of taking any rest, he was engaged in offering up prayers and intercessions, with hymns and spiritual songs, as his manner was, in every house to which he was invited.'

Given, a preacher, who, during the passage of the sun through the ecliptic, addresses his audience every seventh day in two discourses of the dwarfish size to which sermons attain in this degenerate age, and multiply his efforts by forty, and you do not reach the measure of Whitfield's homiletical labours, during each of his next five and thirty years. Combine this with the fervour with which he habitually spoke, the want of all aids to the voice in the fields and the thoroughfares he frequented, and the toil of rendering himself distinctly audible to thousands and tens of thousands, and, considered merely as a physical phenomenon, the result is amongst the most curious of all well-authenticated marvels. If the time spent in travelling from place to place, and some brief intervals of repose and preparation be subtracted, his whole life may be said to have been consumed in the delivery of one continuous or scarcely interrupted sermon. Strange as is such an example of bodily and mental energy, still stranger is the power he pos-

sessed of fascinating the attention of hearers of every rank of life and of every variety of understanding. Not only were the loom, the forge, the plough, the collieries, and the workshops deserted at his approach, but the spell was acknowledged by Hume and Franklin — by Pulteney, Bolingbroke, and Chesterfield — by maids of honour and lords of the bedchamber. Such indeed was its force, that when the scandal could be concealed behind a well-adjusted curtain, 'e'en mitred "auditors" would nod the head.' Neither English reserve, nor the theological discrimination of the Scotch, nor the callous nerves of the slave-dealers of America, nor the stately self-possession of her aborigines, could resist the enchantment. Never was mortal man gifted with such an incapacity of fatiguing or of being fatigued.

It is impossible to award any similar praise to the Reverend Robert Philip, Whitfield's latest biographer. He has followed the steps of the great itinerant from the cradle to the grave, in a volume of nearly six hundred closely printed pages, compiled on the principle that nothing can be superfluous in the narrative of a great man's life which was of any real importance to the man himself, or to his associates. The chronicle so drawn up, illuminated by no eloquence or philosophy, human or divine, and arranged on no intelligible method, is a sore exercise for the memory and the patience of the reader. It records, without selection or forbearance, thirteen successive voyages across the Atlantic — pilgrimages incalculable in every part of the North American continent, from Georgia to Boston — controversies with Wesley on predestination and perfection, and with the Bishops on still deeper mysteries — chapel buildings and subscriptions — preachings and the excitement which

followed them—and characteristic sayings and uncharacteristic letters—meetings and partings—and every other incident, great and small, which has been preserved by the oral or written traditions of Whitfield's followers. His life still remains to be written by some one who shall bring to the task other qualifications than an honest zeal for his fame, and a cordial adoption of his opinions.

From the conflict with the enemies who had threatened her existence, the Church militant turned to resist the unwelcome ally who menaced her repose. Warburton led the van, and behind him many a mitred front scowled on the audacious innovator. Divested of the logomachies which chiefly engaged the attention of the disputants, the controversy between Whitfield and the Bishops lay in a narrow compass. It being mutually conceded that the virtues of the Christian life can result only from certain divine impulses, and that to lay a claim to this holy inspiration when its legitimate fruits are wanting, is a fatal delusion — he maintained, and they denied, that the person who is the subject of this sacred influence has within his own bosom an independent attestation of its reality. So abstruse a debate required the zest of some more pungent ingredients; and the polemics with whom Whitfield had to do, were not such sciolists in their calling as to be ignorant of the necessity of fastening upon him some epithet at once opprobrious and vague. While, therefore, milder spirits arraigned him as an *Enthusiast*, Warburton, with constitutional energy of invective, denounced him as a *Fanatic*. In vain he demanded a definition of these reproachful terms. To have fixed their meaning would have been to destroy their point. They afforded a solution at once compendious, ob-

scure, and repulsive, of whatever was remarkable in his character, and have accompanied his name from that time to the present.

The currents of life had drifted Warburton on divinity as his profession, but his satirical propensities were too strong to yield even to the study of the Gospels. From them he might have discovered the injustice of his censure; for the real nature of religious fanaticism can be learnt with equal clearness from no other source. They tell of some men who compassed sea and land to make one proselyte, that, when made, they might train him up as a persecutor and a bigot; of some, who erected sepulchral monuments to the martyrs of a former age, while unsheathing the sword which was to augment their number; of some who would have called down fire from heaven to punish the inhospitable city which rejected their master; and of some who exhausted their bodies with fasting, and their minds with study, that they might with deeper emphasis curse the ignorant multitude. These all laboured under a mental disease, which, amongst fanatics of every generation, has assumed the same distinctive type. It consists in an unhallowed alliance of the morose and vindictive passions with devotional or religious excitement. Averting the mental eye from what is cheerful, affectionate, and animating in piety, the victims of this malady regard the sects opposed to them not as the children, but as the enemies, of God; and while looking inward with melancholy alternations of self-complacency and self-reproach, learn to contemplate their brethren as their enemies, and Deity itself with but half-suppressed aversion. To connect the name of the kind-hearted George Whitfield with such a reproach as this! To call on the indolent of all future

generations who should believe in Warburton, to associate the despised itinerant of his times with the Dominics and the Bonners of former ages! Truly the indignant prelate knew not what manner of spirit he was of. If ever philanthropy burned in the human heart with a pure and intense flame, embracing the whole family of man in the spirit of universal charity, it was in the heart of George Whitfield. His predestinarian speculations perplexed his mind, but could not check the expansion of his Christian feelings. 'He loved the world that hated him.' He had no preferences but in favour of the ignorant, the miserable, and the poor. In their cause he shrunk from no privation, and declined neither insult nor hostility. To such wrongs he opposed the weapons of an all-enduring meekness, and a love which would not be repulsed. The springs of his benevolence were inexhaustible, and could not choose but flow. Assisted it may have been by natural disposition, and by many external influences; but it ultimately reposed on the fixed persuasion that he was engaged in a sacred duty, the faithful discharge of which would be followed by an imperishable recompense. With whatever undigested subtleties his religious creed was encumbered, they could not hide from him, though they might obscure, the truth, that, between the virtues of this life and the rewards of a future state, the connexion is necessary and indissoluble. Referring this retributive dispensation exclusively to the divine benevolence, his theology inculcated humility, while it inspired love, and fortitude, and hope. It taught him self-distrust, and reliance on a strength superior to his own; and instructed him in the mystery which reconciles the elevation and the purity of disinterested love with those lower motives of action

which more immediately respect the future advantage of the agent. Whatever else Whitfield may have been, a Fanatic, in the proper sense of that term, he assuredly was not.

The charge of Enthusiasm was so ambiguous, that it might, with equal propriety, be understood as conveying either commendation or reproach. Hope is the element in which all the great men of the world move and have their being. Engaged in arduous and lofty designs, they must, to a certain extent, live in an imaginary world, and reanimate their exhausted strength with ideal prospects of the success which is to repay their labours. But, like every other emotion, Hope, when long indulged, yields but a precarious obedience to the reasoning powers; and Reason herself, even when most enlightened, will not seldom make a voluntary abdication of her sovereignty in favour of this her so powerful minister;—surrendering up to the guidance of bright and ardent anticipations, a mind whose lofty aims cannot be realised by obedience to her own sober counsels. For in 'this little state of man' the passions must be the free subjects, not the slaves of the Reason; and while they obey her precepts, should impart to her some of their own spirit, warmth, and energy. It is, however, essential to a well constituted nature, that the subordination of the lower to the superior faculties, though thus occasionally relaxed, should be habitually maintained. Used with due abstinence, Hope acts as an healthful tonic; intemperately indulged, as an enervating opiate. The visions of future triumph, which at first animate exertion, if dwelt upon too intently, will usurp the place of the stern reality, and noble objects will be contemplated, not for their own inherent worth, but on account of the day-dreams they

engender. Thus, Hope aided by Imagination makes one man a hero, another a somnambulist, and a third a lunatic; while it renders them all Enthusiasts. And thus are classed together, under one generic term, characters wide asunder as the poles, and standing at the top and at the bottom of the scale of human intellect. The same epithet is applied indifferently to Francis Bacon and to Emanuel Swedenborg.

Religious men are, for obvious reasons, more subject than others to Enthusiasm, both in its invigorating and in its morbid forms. They are aware that there is about their path and about their bed a real presence, which yet no sense attests. They revere a spiritual inmate of the soul, of whom they have no definite consciousness. They live in communion with one, whose nature is chiefly defined by negatives. They are engaged in duties which can be performed acceptably only at the bidding of the deepest affections. They rest their faith on prophetic and miraculous suspensions, in times past, of the usual course of nature; and derive their hopes and fears from the dim shadows cast by things eternal on the troubled mirror of this transient scene. What wonder if, under the incumbent weight of such thoughts as these, the course of active virtue be too often arrested; or if a religious romance sometimes takes the place of contemplative piety, or if the fictitious gradually supersedes the real; or if a world of dreams, a system of opinions, and a code of morals, which religion disavows, occasionally shed their narcotic influence over a spirit excited and oppressed by the shapeless forms and the fearful powers with which it is conversant?

Both in the more and in the less favourable sense of the expression Whitfield was an Enthusiast. The thraldom of the active to the meditative powers was

indeed abhorrent from his nature; but he was unable to maintain a just equilibrium between them. His life was one protracted calenture; and the mental fever discoloured and distorted the objects of his pursuits. Without intellectual discipline or sound learning, he confounded his narrow range of elementary topics with the comprehensive scheme and science of divinity. Leaping over the state of pupilage, he became at once a teacher and a dogmatist. The lessons which he never drew from books, were never taught him by living men. He allowed himself no leisure for social intercourse with his superiors, or with his equals; but underwent the debilitating effects of conversing, almost exclusively, with those who sat as disciples at his feet. Their homage, and the impetuous tumult of his career, left him but superficially acquainted with himself. Unsuspicious of his own ignorance, and exposed to flattery far more intoxicating than the acclamations of the theatre, he laid the foundations of a new religious system with less of profound thought, and in a greater penury of theological research, than had ever fallen to the lot of a reformer or heresiarch before. The want of learning was concealed under the dazzling veil of popular eloquence, and supplied by the assurance of Divine illumination; and the spiritual influence on which he thus relied, would, if real, have been little else than a continually recurring miracle. It was not a power like that which acts throughout the material world—the unseen and inaudible source of life, sustaining, cementing, and invigorating all things, hiding itself from the heedless beneath the subordinate agency it employs, and disclosed to the thoughtful by its prolific and plastic energies. The access of the Sacred presence, which Whitfield ac-

knowledged, was perceptible by an inward consciousness, and was not merely different, but distinguishable, from the movements of that intellectual and sensitive mechanism of his own nature, by means of which it operated. He discerned it not only in the growth of the active and passive virtues, and in progressive strength and wisdom and peace, but in sudden impulses which visited his bosom, and unexpected suggestions which directed his path. A truth of all others the most consolatory and the most awful, was thus degraded almost to a level with superstitions, which, in their naked form, no man would have more vehemently disclaimed; and the great mystery which blends together the human and the divine in the Christian dispensation, lost much of its sublime character, and with it much of its salutary influence.

It was indeed impossible that a mind feeding upon such visions as he invited and cherished should entirely escape their practical mischief. He would have rejected with horror the impious dream that the indwelling Deity would absolve him from any obligation of justice, mercy, or truth. Yet he could persuade himself that he enjoyed a dispensation from the duty of canonical obedience to his ecclesiastical superiors. His revolt against the authority of the Church of which he was a presbyter, is at once avowed and defended by his latest biographer. 'If,' he says, 'a bishop did good, or allowed good to be done, Whitfield venerated him and his office too; but he despised both whenever they were hostile to truth or zeal—I have no objection to say, whenever they were hostile to his own sentiments and measures. What honest man would respect an unjust judge, or an ignorant physician, because of their professional

titles? It is high time to put an end to this nonsense.'

Mr. Philip's boast is not, or at least should not be, that he is well found in the principles of casuistry. He is no *Ductor Dubitantium*, but a spiritual pugilist, who uses his pen as a cudgel. Whatever may be the value of hard words, they are not sufficient to adjust such a question as this. Under sanctions of the most awful solemnity, Whitfield had bound himself to submit to the lawful commands of his bishop. His 'measures,' being opposed to the law ecclesiastical, were interdicted by his diocesan; but, his 'sentiments' telling him that he was right, and the bishop wrong, the vow of obedience was, it seems, cancelled. If so, it was but an impious mockery to make, or to receive, it. If it be really 'nonsense' to respect so sacred an engagement, then is there less sound sense than has usually been supposed in good faith and plain dealing. Even on the hazardous assumption that the allegiance voluntarily assumed by the clergy of the Anglican church is dissoluble at the pleasure of the inferior party, it is at least evident that Whitfield was bound to abandon the advantages, when he repudiated the duties, of the relation in which he stood to his bishop. But, 'despising,' the episcopal office, he still kept his station in the episcopal church; and, if he had no share in her emoluments, continued at least to enjoy the rank, the worship, the influence, and the privileges which attend her ministers. In the midst of his revolt he performed her offices, and ministered in her temples, as often as opportunity offered. It was the dishonest proceeding of a good man bewildered by dreams of the special guidance of a Divine Monitor. The apology of his biographer is

the error of a religious man led astray by a sectarian spirit.

The sinister influence of Whitfield's imagination on his opinions, and, through them, on his conduct, may be illustrated by another example. He not only became the purchaser of slaves, but condemned the restriction which at that time forbade their introduction into Georgia. There is extant, in his handwriting, an inventory of the effects at the Orphan House, in that province, in which these miserable captives take their place between the cattle and the carts. 'Blessed be God,' he exclaimed, 'for the increase of the negroes. I entirely approve of reducing the Orphan House as low as possible, and I am determined to take no more than the plantation will maintain till I can buy more negroes.' It is true that it was only as founder of this asylum for destitute children that he made these purchases; and true also, that in these wretched bondsmen he recognised immortal beings for whose eternal welfare he laboured; and it is further true that the morality of his age was lax on this subject. But the American Quakers were already bearing testimony against the guilt of slavery and the slave-trade; and even had they been silent, so eminent a teacher of Christianity as Whitfield could not, without just censure, have so far descended from scriptural to conventional virtue.

To measure such a man as George Whitfield by the standards of refined society might seem a very strange, if not a ludicrous attempt. Yet, as Mr. Philip repeatedly, and with emphasis, ascribes to him the character of a 'gentleman,' it must be stated that he was guilty of high crimes and misdemeanours against the laws of that aristocratic commonwealth

in which the assertion of social equality, and the nice observance of the privileges of sex and rank, are so curiously harmonised. Such was his want of animal courage, that in the vigour of his days he could tamely acquiesce in a severe personal chastisement; and fly to the hold of his vessel for safety at the prospect of an approaching sea-fight. Such his failure in self-respect, that a tone of awkward adulation distinguishes nearly all his letters to the ladies of high degree who partook and graced his triumph. But his capital offence against the code of manners was the absence of that pudicity which shrinks from exposing to public gaze the deepest emotions of the heart. In Journals originally divulged, and at last published, by himself, and, throughout his voluminous correspondence, he is 'naked and is not ashamed.' Some very coarse elements must have entered into the composition of a man who could thus scatter abroad disclosures of the secret communings of his spirit with his Maker.

Akin to this fault is his seeming unconsciousness of the oppressive majesty of the topics with which he was habitually occupied. The seraph in the prophetic vision was arrayed with wings, of which some were given to urge his flight, and others to cover his face. Vigorous as were the pinions with which Whitfield moved, he appears to have been unprovided with those beneath which his eyes should have shrunk from too familiar a contemplation of the ineffable glory. Where prophets and apostles 'stood trembling,' he is at his ease; where they adored, he declaims. This is, indeed, one of the besetting sins of licentiates in divinity. But few ever moved among the infinitudes and eternities of invisible things with less embarrassment or with less of silent awe. Illus-

trations might be drawn from every part of his writings, but hardly without committing the irreverence we condemn.

To the lighter graces of taste and fancy Whitfield had no pretension. He wandered from shore to shore unobservant of the wonders of art and nature, and of the strange varieties of men and manners which solicited his notice. In sermons in which no resource within his reach is neglected, there is scarcely a trace to be found of such objects having met his eye or arrested his attention. The poetry of the inspired volume awakens in him no corresponding raptures; and the rhythmical quotations which overspread his letters never rise above the *cantilena* of the tabernacle. In polite literature, in physical and moral science, he never advanced much beyond the standard of the grammar-school of St. Mary de Crypt. Even as a theologian, he has no claims to erudition. He appears to have had no Hebrew and little Greek, and to have studied neither ecclesiastical antiquity nor the great divines of modern times. His reading seems to have been confined to a few, and those not the most considerable, of the works of the later nonconformists. Neither is it possible to assign him a place among profound or original thinkers. He was, in fact, almost an uneducated man; and the powers of his mind were never applied, and perhaps could not have been applied successfully, either to the acquisition of abstruse knowledge, or to the enlargement of its boundaries.

'Let the name of George Whitfield perish if God be glorified,' was his own ardent and sincere exclamation. His disciples will hardly acquiesce in their teacher's self-abasement. They will perhaps resent, as injurious to him and to their cause, these imputations of enthusiasm, of personal timidity, of irreverence and

coarseness of mind, of ignorance and of a mediocrity or a total absence of the powers of fancy, invention, and research. But the apotheosis of saints is no less idolatrous than that of heroes; and they have not imbibed Whitfield's spirit who cannot brook to be told that he had his share of the faults and infirmities which no man more solemnly ascribed to the whole human race.

Such, however, was his energy and self-devotion, that even the defects of his character were rendered subservient to the one end for which he lived. From the days of the Apostles to our own, history records the career of no man who, with a less alloy of motives terminating in self, or of passions breaking loose from the control of reason, concentrated all the faculties of his soul, with intensity and perseverance, for the accomplishment of one great design. He belonged to that rare variety of the human species of which it has been said that the liberties of mankind depend on their inability to combine in erecting an universal monarchy. With nerves incapable of fatigue, and a confidence in himself, which no authority, neglect, or opposition could abate, opposing an impenetrable skin to all the missiles of scorn and contumely, and yet exquisitely sensitive to the affection which cheered, and the applause which rewarded his labours; unembarrassed either by the learning which reveals difficulties, or by the meditative powers which suggest doubts; with an insatiable thirst for active occupation, and an unhesitating faith in whatever cause he undertook; he might have been one of the most dangerous enemies of the peace and happiness of the world, if powers so formidable in their possible abuse had not been directed to a beneficent end. Judged by the wisdom which is of

the earth, earthy, Whitfield would be pronounced a man whose energy ministered to a vulgar ambition, of which the triumph over his ecclesiastical superiors, and the admiration of unlettered multitudes, were the object and the recompense. Estimated by those whose religious opinions and observances are derived from him by hereditary descent, he is nothing less than an apostle, inspired in the latter ages of the Church to purify her faith, and to reform her morals. A more impartial survey of his life and writings may suggest the conclusion, that the homage of admiring crowds, and the blandishments of courtly dames, were neither unwelcome nor unsolicited; that a hierarchy subdued to inaction, if not to silence, gratified his self-esteem; and that, when standing on what he delighted to call his 'throne,' the current of devout and holy thoughts was not uncontaminated by the admixture of some human exultation. But ill betide him who delights in the too curious dissection of the motives of others, or even of his own. Such anatomists breathe an impure air, and unconsciously contract a sickly mental habit. Whitfield was a great and a holy man; among the foremost of the heroes of philanthropy; and as a preacher without a superior or a rival.

If eloquence be justly defined by the emotions it excites, or by the activity it quickens, the greatest orator of our times was he who first announced the victory of Waterloo,—if that station be not rather due to the learned President of the College of Physicians, who daily makes the ears to tingle of those who listen to his prognostics. But the converse of the rule may be more readily admitted, and we may confidently exclude from the list of eloquent speakers him whose audience is impassive whilst he addresses

them, and inactive afterwards. Every seventh day a great company of preachers raise their voices in the land to detect our sins, to explain our duty, to admonish, to alarm, and to console. Compare the prodigious extent of this apparatus with its perceptible results, and, inestimable as they are, who will deny that they disappoint the hopes which, antecedently to experience, the least sanguine would have indulged? The preacher has, indeed, no novelties to communicate. His path has been trodden hard and dry by constant use; yet he speaks as an ambassador from heaven, and his hearers are frail, sorrowing, perplexed, and dying men. The highest interests of both are at stake. The preacher's eye rests on his manuscript; the hearer's turns to the clock; the half hour glass runs out its sand; and the portals close on well-dressed groups of critics, looking for all the world as if just dismissed from a lecture on the tertiary strata.

Taking his stand on some rising knoll, his tall and graceful figure dressed with elaborate propriety, and composed into an easy and commanding attitude, Whitfield's 'clear blue eye' ranged over thousands, and tens of thousands, drawn up in close files on the plain below, or clustering into masses on every adjacent eminence. A 'rabble rout' hung on the skirts of the mighty host; and the feelings of the devout were disturbed by the scurril jests of the illiterate, and the cold sarcasms of the more polished spectators of their worship. But the rich and varied tones of a voice of unequalled depth and compass quickly silenced every ruder sound, — as in rapid succession its ever-changing melodies passed from the calm of simple narrative, to the measured distinctness of argument, to the vehemence of reproof, and the pathos of heavenly consolation. 'Sometimes the preacher

wept exceedingly, stamped loudly and passionately, and was frequently so overcome that for a few seconds one would suspect he could never recover, and, when he did, nature required some little time to compose herself.' In words originally applied to one of the first German Reformers — *vividus vultus, vividi oculi, vividæ manus, denique omnia vivida.* The agitated assembly caught the passions of the speaker, and exulted, wept, or trembled at his bidding. He stood before them, in popular belief, a persecuted man, spurned and rejected by lordly prelates, yet still a presbyter of the Church, and clothed with her authority; — his meek and lowly demeanour chastened and elevated by the conscious grandeur of the apostolic succession. The thoughtful gazed earnestly on a scene of solemn interest, pregnant with some strange and enduring influence on the future condition of mankind. But the wise and the simple alike yielded to the enchantment; and the thronging multitude gave utterance to their emotions in every form in which nature seeks relief from feelings too strong for mastery.

Whitfield had cultivated the histrionic art to a perfection which has rarely been obtained, even by the most eminent of those who have trodden the stage in sock or buskin. Foote and Garrick were his frequent hearers, and brought away with them the characteristic and very just remark, that 'his oratory was not at its full height until he had repeated a discourse forty times.' The transient delirium of Franklin, (attested by the surrender on one occasion of all the contents of his purse at a 'charity sermon,' and by a Quaker's refusal to lend more to a man who had lost his wits,) did not prevent his investigating the causes of this unwonted excitement,

'I came,' he says, 'by hearing him often, to distinguish between sermons newly composed and those he had preached often in the course of his travels. His delivery of the latter was so improved by frequent repetition, that every accent, every emphasis, every modulation of the voice was so perfectly timed, that, without being interested in the subject, one could not help being pleased with the discourse, — a pleasure of much the same kind as that received from an excellent piece of music.'

The basis of the singular dominion which was thus exercised by Whitfield during a period equal to that assigned by ordinary calculation for the continuance of human life, would repay a more careful investigation than we have space or leisure to attempt. Amongst subordinate influences, the faintest of all is that which may have been occasionally exercised over the more refined members of his congregations by the romantic scenery in which they assembled. The tears shaping 'white gutters down the black faces of the colliers, black as they came out of the coal-pits,' were certainly not shed under any overwhelming sense of the picturesque, but the preacher himself felt and courted this excitement. 'The open firmament above me, the prospect of the adjacent fields,' 'to which sometimes was added the solemnity' 'of the approaching evening,' was, he says, 'almost too much for me.' But a far more effectual resource was found in the art of diverting into a new and unexpected channel, the excited feelings of a multitude already brought together for purposes the most strangely contrasted to his own. Journeying to Wales, he passes over Hampton Common, and finds himself surrounded by twelve thousand people collected to see a man hung in chains, and an extempore

pulpit is immediately provided within sight of this deplorable object. On another similar occasion, the wretched culprit was permitted to steal an hour from the eternity before him, while listening, or seeming to listen, to a sermon delivered by Whitfield to himself, and to the spectators of his approaching doom. He reaches Basingstoke, when the inhabitants are engaged in all the festivities of a country fair, and thus records the use he made of so tempting an opportunity. 'As I passed on horseback I saw the stage, and as I rode further I met divers coming to the revel, which affected me so much, that I had no rest in my spirit, and therefore having asked counsel of God, and perceiving an unusual warmth and power enter my soul, though I was gone above a mile, I could not bear to see so many dear souls for whom Christ had died ready to perish, and no minister or magistrate interpose; upon this, I told my dear fellow-travellers that I was resolved to follow the example of Howell Harris in Wales, and bear my testimony against such lying vanities, let the consequences to my own private person be what they would. They immediately assenting, I rode back to the town, got upon the stage erected for the wrestlers, and began to show them the error of their ways.'

The often-told tale of Whitfield's controversy with the Merry-Andrew at Moorfields, still more curiously illustrates the skill and intrepidity with which he contrived to divert to his own ends an excitement running at high tide in the opposite direction. The following is an extract from his own narrative of the encounter.

'For many years, from one end of Moorfields to the other, booths of all kinds have been erected for mountebanks, players, puppet-shows, and such like.

With a heart bleeding with compassion for so many thousands led captive by the devil at his will, on Whit-Monday, at six o'clock in the morning, attended by a large congregation of praying people, I ventured to lift up a standard amongst them, in the name of Jesus of Nazareth. Perhaps there were about ten thousand in waiting, not for me, but for Satan's instruments to amuse them. Glad was I to find that I had for once, as it were, got the start of the devil. I mounted my field pulpit; almost all flocked immediately around it; I preached on these words — "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness," &c. They gazed, they listened, they wept, and I believe that many felt themselves stung with the deep conviction for their past sins. All was hushed and solemn. Being thus encouraged, I ventured out again at noon. The whole fields seemed, in a bad sense of the word, all white, ready not for the Redeemer's, but for Beelzebub's harvest. All his agents were in full motion. Drummers, trumpeters, Merry-Andrews, masters of puppet-shows, exhibitions of wild beasts, players, &c. &c. all busy in entertaining their respective auditors. I suppose there could not be less than twenty or thirty thousand people. My pulpit was fixed on the opposite side, and immediately, to their great mortification, they found the number of their attendants sadly lessened. Judging that, like St. Paul, I should now be called, as it were, to fight with beasts at Ephesus, I preached from these words, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians." You may easily guess that there was some noise among the craftsmen, and that I was honoured with having a few stones, dirt, rotten eggs, and pieces of dead cats thrown at me, whilst engaged in calling them from their favourite but lying vanities. My soul was in-

deed among lions, but far the greatest part of my congregation, which was very large, seemed for a while turned into lambs. This Satan could not brook. One of his choicest servants was exhibiting, trumpeting on a large stage, but as soon as the people saw me in my black robes and my pulpit, I think all to a man left him and ran to me. For a while I was enabled to lift up my voice like a trumpet, and many heard the joyful sound. God's people kept praying, and the enemy's agents made a kind of roaring at some distance from our camp. At length they approached near, and the Merry-Andrew got up on a man's shoulders, and, advancing near the pulpit, attempted to slash me with a long heavy whip several times, but always with the violence of his motion tumbled down. I think I continued in praying, preaching, and singing (for the noise was too great to preach) for about three hours. We then retired to the Tabernacle, with my pockets full of notes from persons brought under concern, and read them amidst the praises and spiritual acclamations of thousands. Three hundred and fifty awakened souls were received in one day, and I believe the number of notes exceeded a thousand.'

The propensity to mirth which, in common with all men of robust mental constitution, Whitfield possessed in an unusual degree, was, like every thing else belonging to him, compelled to minister to the interest and success of his preaching; but, however much his pleasantries may attest the alacrity of his mind, it would be difficult to assign them any other praise. Oscillating in spirit as well as in body, between Drury-Lane and the Tabernacle, Shuter, the comedian, attended in Tottenham Court Road during the run of his successful performance of the character

of Ramble, and was greeted with the following apostrophe, — 'and thou, poor Ramble, who hast so long rambled from Him, come thou also. Oh! end thy ramblings, and come to Jesus.' The preacher in this instance descended not a little below the level of the player.

In the eighteenth century the crown of martyrdom was a prize for which Roman Catholics alone were permitted to contend, and Whitfield was unable to gain the influence which he would have derived from the stake, from a prison, or a confiscation. Conscious, however, of the importance of such sufferings, he persuaded himself, and desired to convince the world, that he had to endure them. The Bishops were persecutors, because they repelled with some acrimony his attacks on their authority and reputation. The mob were persecutors, because they pelted a man who insisted on their hearing him preach when they wanted to see a bear dance, or a conjurer eat fire. A magistrate was a persecutor, because he summoned him to appear on an unfounded charge, and then dismissed him on his own recognisance. He gloried with better reason in the contemptuous language with which he was assailed, even by the more decorous of his opponents, and in the ribaldries of Foote and Bickerstaff. He would gladly have partaken of the doom of Rogers and Ridley, if his times had permitted, and his cause required it; but the fires of Smithfield were put out, and the exasperated Momus of the fair, with his long whip, alone remained to do the appropriate honours of the feast of St. Bartholomew.

There are extant seventy-five of the sermons by which Whitfield agitated nations, and the more remote influence of which is still distinctly to be traced,

in the popular divinity and in the national character of Great Britian and of the United States. They have, however, fallen into neglect; for to win permanent acceptance for a book, into which the principles of life were not infused by its author, is a miracle which not even the zeal of religious proselytes can accomplish. Yet, inferior as were his inventive to his histrionic powers, Whitfield is entitled to a place among theological writers, which, if it cannot challenge admiration, may at least excite and reward curiosity. Many, and those by far the worst, of his discourses bear the marks of careful preparation. Take at hazard a sermon of one of the preachers usually distinguished as evangelical, add a little to its length, and subtract a great deal from its point and polish, and you have one of his more elaborate performances; — common-place topics discussed in a common-place way; a respectable mediocrity of thought and style; endless variations on one or two cardinal truths; — in short, the task of a clerical Saturday evening, executed with piety, good sense, and exceeding sedateness. But open one of that series of Whitfield's sermons which bears the stamp of having been conceived and uttered at the same moment, and imagine it recited to myriads of eager listeners with every charm of voice and gesture, and the secret of his unrivalled fascination is at least partially disclosed. He places himself on terms of intimacy and unreserved confidence with you, and makes it almost as difficult to decline the invitation to his familiar talk as if Montaigne himself had issued it. The egotism is amusing, affectionate, and warm-hearted; with just that slight infusion of self-importance without which it would pass for affectation. In his art of rhetoric, personification holds the first place; and the *prosopopœia* is

so managed as to quicken abstractions into life, and to give them individuality and distinctness without the use of any of those spasmodic and distorted images which obey the incantations of vulgar rhetoricians. Every trace of study and contrivance is obliterated by the hearty earnestness which pervades each successive period, and by the vernacular and homely idioms in which his meaning is conveyed. The recollection of William Cobbet will obtrude itself on the reader of these discourses, though the remembrance of the sturdy athlete of the 'Political Register,' with his sophistry and his sarcasm, his drollery and his irascible vigour, sorely disturbs the sacred emotions which it was the one object of the preacher to awaken. And it is in this grandeur and singleness of purpose that the charm of Whitfield's preaching seems really to have consisted. You feel that you have to do with a man who lived and spoke, and who would gladly have died, to deter his hearers from the path of destruction, and to guide them to holiness and to peace. His gossiping stories, and dramatic forms of speech, are never employed to dissipate the awful emotions which he proposes to excite. Conscience is not permitted to find an intoxicating draught in spiritual excitement, or a narcotic in glowing imagery. Guilt and its punishment, pardon and spotless purity, death and an eternal existence, stand out in bold relief on every page. From these the eye of the teacher is never withdrawn, and to these the attention of the hearer is riveted. All that is poetic, grotesque, or rapturous, is employed to deepen these impressions, and is dismissed as soon as that design is answered. Deficient in learning, meagre in thought, and redundant in language as are these discourses,

they yet fulfil the one great condition of genuine eloquence. They propagate their own kindly warmth and leave their stings behind them.

The enumeration of the sources of Whitfield's power is still essentially defective. Neither energy, nor eloquence, nor histrionic talents, nor any artifices of style, nor the most genuine sincerity and self-devotedness, nor all these united, would have enabled him to mould the religious character of millions in his own and future generations. The secret lies deeper, though not very deep. It consisted in the nature of the theology he taught — in its perfect simplicity and universal application. His thirty or forty thousand sermons were but so many variations on two key-notes. Man is guilty, and may obtain forgiveness; he is immortal, and must ripen here for endless weal or woe hereafter. Expanded into innumerable forms, and diversified by infinite varieties of illustration, these two cardinal principles were ever in his heart and on his tongue. Let who would invoke poetry to embellish the Christian system, or philosophy to penetrate its depths, from his lips it was delivered as an awful and urgent summons to repent, to believe, and to obey. To give orders on ship-board in a tempest in the cadences of Haydn, or in all the categories of Aristotle, would have seemed to him not a whit more preposterous than to divert his hearers from their danger and their refuge, their duties and their hopes, to any topics more trivial or more abstruse. In fine, he was thoroughly and continually in earnest, and, therefore, possessed that tension of the soul which admitted neither of lassitude nor relaxation. Few and familiar as were the topics to which he was confined, his was that state of mind in which alone eloquence, properly so called, can be

born, and a moral and intellectual sovereignty acquired.

The effects of Whitfield's labours on succeeding times have been thrown into the shade by the more brilliant fortunes of the Ecclesiastical Dynasty of which Wesley was at once the founder, the lawgiver, and the head. Yet a large proportion of the American Churches, and that great body of the Church of England which, assuming the title of 'Evangelical,' has been refused that of 'Orthodox,' may trace back their spiritual genealogy by regular descent from him. It appears, indeed, that there are among them some who, for having disavowed this ancestry, have brought themselves within the swing of Mr. Philip's club. To rescue them, if it were possible, from the bruises which they have provoked, would be to arrest the legitimate march of penal justice. The consanguinity is attested by historical records, and by the strongest family resemblance. The quarterings of Whitfield are entitled to a conspicuous place in the 'Evangelical' scutcheon; and they who bear it are not wise in being ashamed of the blazonry.

If the section of the Church of England which usually bears that title be properly so distinguished, there can be no impropriety in designating as her four Evangelists John Newton, Thomas Scott, Joseph Milner, and Henry Venn. Newton held himself forth, and was celebrated by others, as the great living example of the regenerating efficacy of the principles of his school. Scott was their interpreter of Holy Scripture, Milner their ecclesiastical historian, Venn their systematic teacher of the whole Christian institutes. In some respects these men closely resembled each other. A certain sturdiness of character and intrepidity of mind belonged to them

all. They all possessed that free, flowing, and inartificial style in which a full man pours out the mature results of his studies and meditations. Each of them was, to a considerable extent, self-educated. As soon as he had made good any position in theology, each of them was accustomed to retain it firmly as a post in advance, or basis for further conquests of the same kind. And, after effecting many such conquests, they all reached and adhered to that system of divinity, which has so long arrested the corruption, and prevented the fall, of our Elizabethan church economy. But though in contact at these points, they were directly antithetical to each other at many more.

In the year 1736 John Newton, then a boy in his twelfth year, commenced a seafaring life in a merchant vessel, under the command of his father, a master mariner. His mother was then dead. She had given much religious instruction to her son, and had bequeathed to him the inheritance of many blessings, and of many prayers. These maternal cares yielded at length an abundant harvest; but their immediate fruits were harsh and premature. 'I took up,' he says, 'and laid aside a religious profession, three or four times before I was sixteen years old.' 'I spent the greater part of every day in reading the Scriptures, in meditation, and in prayer. I fasted often. I even abstained from animal food for three months. I would hardly answer a question, for fear of speaking an idle word.'

From this state of mind, which he afterwards condemned as 'gloomy, stupid, unsociable, and useless,' Newton passed by an easy transition to scepticism. The faith of the young ascetic was overthrown by a stray volume of the 'Characteristics.' By a second and equally natural revolution the 'Rhapsodies' of Shafts-

bury made way for other raptures of a more sublunary kind. As he journeyed to join his ship in the Thames, Newton formed an acquaintance with Mary Catlett, a Kentish maiden in her fourteenth year, for whose fair sake he abandoned his voyage, and the prospects it held out to him of an advantageous settlement in the West Indies. 'The world' was once 'well lost for love,' and at the same shrine the sailor boy sacrificed the management of a plantation in Jamaica. He received, in return, a romance, composed by Hope and embellished by Imagination, of a minority to be passed by himself and Mary Catlett on the same side of the broad Atlantic. Relentless fate destroyed the fiction and postponed their union until Newton had consumed seven dark and dismal years in frequent and protracted exiles. 'During the whole of that time,' he assures us, 'she was never absent for a single hour from his waking thoughts.' When occasionally resident in England, in the brief intervals of these early voyages, he performed sometimes twice, and always once, in each week, a pilgrimage of many miles to Shooter's Hill, there to gaze, not indeed on the house in which she dwelt, for that was still far away, but on the country towards which her eyes might perhaps be directed at the same moment!

Before the close of his septennial banishment our nautical Oroondates made one visit to the actual abode of the enchantress, when, in obedience to the spell, he again permitted his ship to put to sea without him. The penalty was immediate and severe. On reaching the port at which he ought to have embarked, he was pressed into the King's service, and sent on board the 'Harwich,' a ship of war then under sailing orders for the East Indies. Even this disaster

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soon assumed a comparatively smiling aspect. Struck with Newton's intelligence and address, his captain rated him on the ship's books as a midshipman, and thus laid open to him the path to preferment, and perhaps to martial renown. But his heart was with his idol. In the hope of another interview with her he effected his escape, and on his recapture was reduced to the rank of a common seaman. It was with a fierce resentment that he surrendered himself up to this degradation. 'I was,' he says, 'as miserable on all hands as could well be imagined.' 'My heart was filled with the most excruciating passions, eager desires, bitter rage, and black despair. Every hour exposed me to some new insult and hardship, with no hope of relief or mitigation. Whether I looked inward or outward, I could perceive nothing but darkness and misery. I kept my eyes fixed upon the English shore, till, the ship's distance increasing, it insensibly disappeared, and when I could see it no longer I was tempted to throw myself into the sea, which, according to the wicked system I had adopted, would put an end to my sorrows at once.'

The wholesome discipline of His Majesty's ship 'Harwich,' however deeply abhorred by Newton, seems not to have been altogether unprofitable to him. He had acquired a certain respect for his own good name, but his conduct was such that he was readily permitted to exchange into a merchant ship, which they found lying at Madeira, on her way to the coast of Africa. 'While passing from one ship to the other, one reason why he rejoiced in the change (such is his own statement) was, that he might now be as abandoned as he pleased without any controversy; and from this time,' he says, 'I was exceedingly vile indeed, little, if anything, short of that animated

description of an almost irrecoverable state, which we have in 2 Peter, ii. 14.'

On his arrival on the Gold Coast, Newton became the overseer of one of those depôts of slaves which were then, as now, maintained at the mouths of the great African rivers, for the immediate and cheap supply of that article of commerce to the traders resorting thither. But he sank into a bondage only less deplorable than that of his captives. The power of his master and of his master's concubine over him was absolute, and their tyranny intolerable. Sick and despised, half naked, and half starved, he dragged out a wretched existence, feeding on fish, which he could not catch without extreme peril, and which when caught he was unable to dress, and often exposed without shelter in the rainy season, during forty successive hours, to the inclemency of that fearful climate. As he traversed the shore from one pestilential estuary to another, the unhappy outcast would have been as destitute of solace from within as from without, had it not happened that a copy of Barrow's Euclid had stuck by him in all his wanderings, and, while he traced the diagrams on the sand, and revolved the demonstrations, his sorrows took a temporary flight.

Better, or, at least, less painful days arrived. Newton was transferred to another master, who admitted him to a share in his slave factory. 'And now,' he says, 'I was decently clothed, and lived in plenty, business flourished, and our employer was satisfied, and here I began to be wretch enough to think myself happy. In the language of the country, the white man was growing black,'—that is, he was learning to contract and to satiate his desires within the narrow range of those sensual gratifications which

lay at his command. From such happiness he was opportunely rescued by the appearance off the coast of a ship from Liverpool, the owner of which, Mr. Annesty, a friend of his family, had directed the master to inquire for him among the slave-traders in those parts, and, if possible, to effect his deliverance. Reluctantly, and not without the practice by the master of some cajolery, Newton was persuaded to return home, and, after incurring the perils of the sea in their utmost terrors, he reached the north of Ireland in the year 1748.

This he regards as the epoch of his reformation, and as the commencement of the happier portion of his life. In a ship, with the command of which he was entrusted by Mr. Annesty, he made four slave-trading voyages to the coast of Africa. After the completion of the first voyage, he married Mary Catlett. After the completion of the fourth, he was compelled by a dangerous illness to exchange his seafaring pursuits for the office of a landing waiter in the customs at Liverpool, for which also he was indebted to the zealous and persevering friendship of Mr. Annesty.

A still more momentous change was at hand. It had been the cherished hope of Newton's pious mother that he might become a faithful minister of the Gospel, and many circumstances concurred to bring about the full, though tardy, accomplishment of her prayer. However dissolute and profane he had been in his passage from youth to manhood, the impressions of her devout cares for him had never been wholly obliterated from his mind; and he had been fortunate in his childhood in a schoolmaster of the true Busby breed, from whose lips and vigorous right arm he had received other and more severe lessons, which he

never had entirely forgotten. To that inflexible pedagogue he was indebted for his soothing intercourse with Euclid on the sea-shore in Africa, and for the company of Horace, of Livy, of Erasmus, and of Casimir on his subsequent voyages to the same coast. To his mother he owed a taste for the Bible, and for books of devotion, which in due time expelled the pagan poets from his cabin. Old ocean probably never before or since, floated such another slave ship. On board of her, indeed, were to be seen all the ordinary phenomena. Packed together like herrings, stifled, sick, and broken-hearted, the negroes in that aquatic Pandemonium died after making futile attempts at insurrection. But, separated by a single plank from his victims, the voice of their gaoler might be heard, day by day, conducting the prayers of his ship's company, singing a devout imitation of his own, of the verses of Propertius ('tu mihi curarum requies,' &c.), and, as he assures us, experiencing on his last voyage to Guinea 'sweeter and more frequent hours of divine communion' than he had ever elsewhere known.

From these devotional exercises, Newton passed into much religious society in the West Indies, and in what was then British North America. There he became acquainted with George Whitfield, 'whose ministry,' he says, 'was exceedingly useful to him.' Still more useful were his leisure, and his solitary studies, at Liverpool. In the custom-house, at that town, he made such progress in Hebrew and in Greek, as to be able to read the originals of the Holy Scriptures, and, if we can rely on his own assurance, he there became acquainted 'with the best writers in divinity, in Latin, French, and English.' If Hooker was of the number of those 'best writers,' he found a

refractory pupil in John Newton. He became an absolute latitudinarian on all points of ecclesiastical polity. After making 'some small attempts' as a Nonconformist, 'in a way of preaching and expounding,' he was much disposed to join the Protestant Dissenters altogether. He esteemed it a matter of very little, if of any, importance, with what outward ceremonial he might officiate, or in what Christian society. His one solicitude was to find 'a public opportunity to testify the riches of divine grace, thinking that he was, above most living, a fit person to proclaim that faithful saying, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save the chief of sinners.'

After some delay, he was enabled to gratify this desire by the counsels, and by the united influence, of Richard Cecil, of the Earl of Dartmouth, and of Young, the author of the 'Night Thoughts.' They not only induced him to seek, but enabled him to find, admission as a pastor in the episcopal fold. In his thirty-ninth year he became at once a deacon of the Church of England, and curate of the parish and town of Olney in Buckinghamshire.

At Olney, Newton composed and published many sermons and religious letters, some spiritual exercises in verse, and a brief survey of Ecclesiastical History. There also he formed that friendship which the genius of Cowper has immortalised; became the friend and almoner of John Thornton, the munificent; and contributed largely to form and to mature the theological system of Thomas Scott, the commentator. At Olney, also, he himself laboured to inculcate that system, but with no happy issue. After a continuance there of sixteen years, he acknowledged, and deplored, his inability to restrain the 'gross licentiousness' of his followers 'on particular occasions,'

and was at length driven away 'by the incorrigible spirit prevailing in the parish, which he had so long laboured to reform.'

He was indebted to John Thornton for a place of refuge from Olney, and for a station of far greater prominence. He became the rector of St. Mary Woolnoth, Lombard Street, in the City of London, where he continued till the year 1807, when he died in the eighty-third year of his age, in the twenty-seventh of his incumbency of that church, and in the forty-third of his ministry.

The animal homo, male or female, is always found in a defective, crude, and distorted state, unless when exhibiting, in his or her character, a certain fusion and reconcilement of the distinctive qualities of either sex. A tearless, cheerless, pitiless world this globe of ours would have been, if, according to the wish ascribed to our first progenitor, his race could have been perpetuated without the intervention of Eve or of her daughters! A world in which love, hate, zeal, hope, courage, and every other active passion would have burnt fiercely and blazed brilliantly; but where sensibility, fear, compassion, modesty, sympathy, and all the other passive emotions, would have been wanting to counteract and mitigate the flame! A world in which the lawless many would have been a band of homicides, and in which the heroical few would have borne a strong resemblance to John Newton, the sailor, the slave-trader, the author, and the rector of St. Mary Woolnoth. His strength and his weakness alike consisted in the strange predominance of the male above the female elements of his nature.

In his own age and country few ministers of the Gospel occupied a more conspicuous station, or exercised a more extensive influence. But he attained

that eminence by asserting for himself a distinction which nothing but the most absolute *mascularity* could have challenged. It was the distinction of having emerged from a depth of moral debasement into which few men had ever fallen, and from which scarcely any man had ever been restored. In the narrative which he published of his own life, he had the courage to describe himself as having been 'the willing slave of every evil, possessed with a legion of unclean spirits;' — as not only 'having sinned with a high hand himself, but as having made it his study to tempt and seduce others upon every occasion; very eagerly seeking occasion;' — as 'big with mischief, and, like one infected with a pestilence, capable of spreading a taint wherever he went;' — as 'shunned and despised,' even by the savages among whom he lived, 'and as an outcast lying in his blood.'

When Newton indited these and many other passages of equally bitter self-condemnation, he certainly neither desired nor expected to be understood by his readers to the letter. Pachydermatous as he was, he could not propose to draw on himself either the abhorrence, or the indignation, or even the distrust of the world. The wilful and deliberate murder of one's own good name, is a crime unknown in the catalogue of human offences. Such a felo-de-se would be ripe for any other felony. What, then, suggested these confessions, and what was the meaning which the writer of them really designed to convey?

They were certainly not the product of that voracious vanity which finds its account even in self-crimination, and which would rather depict the vices, faults, and follies of the painter, than banish self altogether from the canvas. This canine appetite for human sympathy of any kind, and on any terms,

is the disease of men tormented, like Rousseau, by irritable nerves and a delicate organization. But Newton had nerves of brass, and his sinews were iron.

Neither is it credible that he used these dark colours in his self-portraiture in order to win the praise of humility, candour, and tenderness of the awakened conscience. The veil of penitence has, indeed, been sometimes worn for this purpose; and there have not been wanting those who have gratified a morbid ambition by appearing in public in the white sheet falling round them in graceful folds, and arranged as an ornamental drapery. But, from the very bottom of his manly heart, Newton would have loathed all such nauseous affectations. He had not a thought or a feeling in common with Lord Byron and his imitators. To his last breath, he was an honest downright sailor, who always employed what seemed to him the most apt, direct, and intelligible words to express what he really thought.

And such was doubtless his purpose in his penitential autobiography. His mistake was that of transferring to the press the language of the oratory. When he lifted up his voice in the market-place, and when he went into his secret chamber and shut to the door, his style was still the same. He poured out the language of self-crimination without changing a word, whether he addressed the sacred presence invoked in his prayers, or the coarse, bad world without. Insensible to the proprieties of places and of times, he could not perceive that Truth herself ceases to be true, unless she shapes her discourse to the apprehension of her audience. Rightly judging that, in the retrospect of the sins of his youth, he could not abase himself too much when bowing down

before the Holiest, he erroneously inferred that it was impossible to exaggerate his guilt when addressing his fellow sinners on the same melancholy theme. Yet no danger could be greater or more evident.

When divested of all colouring, and stated in plain words, the fact appears to be that, in his seafaring life, from his seventeenth to his twenty-second year, Newton was irreligious and profane, and was accustomed to violate the Seventh Commandment as recklessly as the third; but that, even in those evil days, he was habitually sober and scrupulously honest. At a later period, taking the Scriptures for his law, and the evangelical commentators on them for his counsellors, he might well look back on his early career with profound shame and with the deepest consciousness of ill desert. But, when he confided those self-upbraidings to mankind at large in language so contrite, so emphatic, and so vague, what could he reasonably expect but that (deeming it altogether inappropriate to the occasion, if referring merely to the impieties and debaucheries of a very young sailor when surrounded by every form of temptation) the world would adopt one of two theories — either that it referred to guilt, of which any more precise mention would have been insufferable, or that it stood on the same level, in point of sincerity, with the penitential emblazonments of William Huntington, 'Sinner Saved,' and of his worshipful fraternity? By what method were Newton's cotemporaries to discover that the voice which reached them from the vicarage of Olney, was the exact echo of his solitary devotions there, and that he who invited them to so strange a confidence, was neither an enormous transgressor, nor an actor wearing the mask of contrition, but a straightforward sailor, who, with a skin as thick as

the copper sheathing of his ship, laid bare the recesses of his conscience with as little squeamishness as he would have thrown open her hold and overhauled her cargo.

The perfect good faith with which the penitent confessed himself to his readers, is sufficiently proved by the disappointment which he prepared for them at the very same moment. There is a natural history of religious conversions. It commences with melancholy, advances through contrition to faith, is then conducted to tranquillity, and, after a while, to rapture, and subsides at length into an abiding consolation and peace. No epoch in this mental progress can be passed over by the narrator of any such change without raising some suspicion of its genuineness in those who have studied the human heart, rather as it is described in pious books, than as it works in pious men. But, braving all such suspicions, and strong in conscious sincerity, Newton acknowledged, without the least reserve, that he had overleapt all of these stages. His heart of oak had been rent by no poignant sorrow, nor had it been agitated by any tumultuous joy, from the beginning to the end of his spiritual course. With no vehement internal conflict whatever, he shed the skin of a dissolute seaman, and sheltered himself in that of a devout clergyman. He gave up bad habits of life for an infinitely better course, with abundant good sense, seriousness, and deliberation, but with very little passion or excitement. Ill as such an anomaly squared with the prepossessions of those for whom he wrote, he would not deviate by an hair's breadth from the simple truth, nor affect any feeling which he had not really experienced, either to propitiate the good will of his teachers or disciples, or to do homage to their religious theories.

With similar hardihood Newton threw the broad glare of day into the Arcana of his most sacred human affections. He had loved Mary Catlett with all the fervent energy of truth. He depicted that love to the world at large, with all the unscrupulous minuteness of fiction. The ardour of his attachment had triumphed over absence, profligacy, and despair. His letters to her, throbbing with every pulse of that emotion, were, during his own lifetime, on sale at the book-stalls! She was to him a second existence, dearer and holier than his own. But, on the arrival of her mortal agony, 'I took,' he says, 'my post by her bed-side, and watched her nearly three hours, with a candle in my hand, till I saw her breathe her last.' 'I was afraid of sitting at home, and indulging myself by poring over my loss, and therefore I was seen in the street, and visited some of my serious friends the very next day. I likewise preached three times while she lay dead in the house, and, after she was deposited in the vault, I preached her funeral sermon with little more sensible emotion than if it had been for another person.' 'I preached from a text which I had reserved from my first entrance on the ministry for this particular service, if I should survive her, and be able to speak.'

Newton was a copious writer of letters. They were pious, wise, and affectionate, and flowed freely out from the depths, which much self-knowledge, and much study, had opened in his mind. They were admirably adapted to feed the flame of devotion in the bosoms of the writer and of his correspondents, and to one collection of them, he accordingly gave the appropriate title of Cardiphonia. But the language of Newton's heart became, in his own lifetime, one of the embellishments of the windows of Pater-

noster Row! Romance and poetry have beautifully said, and fondly sung, much of friendship the balm of life. It is, however, a balm which loses much of its virtue if rubbed in with a rough hand. However unquestionable a blessing in itself, it may, by such management, be rendered a no less unequivocal discipline. Such, probably, was the judgment of Newton's correspondents, when they found his letters to them advertised in the newspapers. Such also was apparently the judgment of the most illustrious of his friends, William Cowper.

No two human beings ever experienced more fully the attractive force of contrarieties of tastes and tempers, than the pastor and the poet of Olney. The sensitive man of genius partook in the labours, revered the character, loved the person, and writhed in the grasp, of his robust and hard-favoured neighbour; and when he sang the fate of the rose, broken in a rude attempt to shake off the moisture which depressed it, he probably aimed a gentle rebuke at the ungentle touch which was occasionally put forth at the vicarage, to dry up his own tears. The cohesion between the two was obviously never complete. There was, indeed, one repulsive force, which must always have prevented it. Newton had been the manager of a slave factory, and the master of a slave ship. Cowper abhorred the slave-trade with his whole soul, and denounced it with passionate energy. Horrors which had been invisible to the mariner, though placed immediately before his bodily eyes, had presented themselves to the imagination of the poet in all their frightful details. The one had publicly commemorated his pursuit of this traffic, without one word of apology or self-reproach on that account. The other was calling on God and man to

arrest it as a crime, in which all the varieties of human wickedness met, and associated, in deadly union. Between the writer of such an autobiography, and the writer of such verse, there yawned a gulph which nothing could ever entirely fill up.

The prolonged slave-trading of John Newton, and still more his cold and phlegmatic avowal of it, has ever been the great blot on his 'evangelical' scutcheon. Before the tribunal in which Posterity sits in judgment on the men of former times, he appears not in his sailor's blue jacket, but in full canonicals. Being arraigned as a remorseless slave-trader, his defence is, that he was eminent as a penitent, still more eminent as a saint, and eminent above all as a zealous and effective preacher of righteousness. The judges are accordingly required to pronounce a decree, consigning his memory either to the lowest degradation, or to the highest posthumous glory. A singular and a perplexing dilemma for the bench!

One point seems clear enough. Newton could not be, at one and the same time, a slave-trader and a saint. To this extent he may safely be judged out of his own mouth. 'I would not give a straw' (such is his impartial and honest declaration) 'for that assurance which sin will not damp. If David had come from his adultery, and had talked of his assurance at that time, I should have despised his speech.' When Newton himself came from his man-stealing, and his homicides, and talked of his 'sweet hours of divine communion on his last voyage to Guinea,'—and of no employment 'affording greater advantages to an awakened mind, for promoting the life of God in the soul, especially to a person who has the command of a ship,' 'and still more so in African voyages,'—we are compelled to take up his own

parable against him, and, in his own words, to say, that his speech is to be despised. There can be no fellowship between light and darkness; and woe to us if reverence for any name, however worthy, zeal for any doctrines, however orthodox, or attachment to any party, however estimable, shall induce us to disregard the eternal land-marks between good and evil, or to believe that the service of Moloch can be reconciled with the service of God. Let Him be true, and every man a liar.

Does it then follow that the venerable John Newton was either an impostor or the unresisting victim of self-love and of self-deceit? A thousand times no! All that can be inferred is that his priesthood at the altar of Mammon, with its blood-stained rites, could not be synchronous with his priesthood at that other shrine, at which human love presumes to offer, and divine love condescends to accept, the heart of the worshipper as the one appropriate sacrifice. At that shrine Newton ministered during forty-three successive years, the very counterpart of our old friend Mr. Greatheart, beneath whose shield Mr. Feeblemind and Mrs. Much-afraid found shelter, and before whose arm the walls of Doubting Castle, and the might of Giant Despair were overthrown. The charge that, during some preceding years, he was a ruthless slave-trader, and that to the last he was little sensible of the heinousness of that guilt, cannot be admitted to countervail such services, or to obscure the lustre of a life in which the brightness of his Christian course was unsullied by a single stain during more than half a century.

For in the court of Posterity it is a well-settled point of law, that in mitigation, if not in bar, of any penal sentence, the defendant may plead, that the genera-

tion to which he belonged did not regard as culpable, or as scandalous, the conduct imputed to him as a crime by men of a later age; but that, on the contrary, it was sanctioned by the prevalent opinions, and countenanced by the general practice, of his contemporaries. This apology may be justly alleged on behalf of Newton. In his early days the current of public sentiment in favour of the slave-trade, ran too strongly to be stemmed, except by the most powerful understanding, guided by the most healthful conscience. There can be no reason to distrust the accuracy of the following statement, in which he adverts to his own participation in it:—

'During the time I was engaged in the slave-trade, I never had the least scruple as to its lawfulness. I was, upon the whole, satisfied with it, as the appointment Providence had marked out for me.' 'However, I considered myself as a sort of jailer or turnkey, and I was sometimes shocked with an employment that was perpetually conversant with chains, bolts, and shackles. In this view I had often petitioned in my prayers that the Lord in his own time would be pleased to fix me in a more humane calling.' Such is the dominion of the social over the individual conscience! Such the controul which the immoral maxims of his associates may obtain, even over a devout student of Holy Scripture! So hopeless is it to shape a right course, even by the aid of that heavenly compass, unless the navigator shall make allowance for the disturbing influence of the magnetic currents through which he is passing! Richard Cecil himself, who completed and republished Newton's Biography, seems to have been blind to the wide deviation of the needle, by which his friend and brother evangelist was misled. He gave to their

common disciples a new edition of that work, without so much as one passing remark on the incongruity with which the warp of homicidal recollections is there interwoven with the woof of devotional exercises. Alas for the inconsistency of the wisest and the best among us! But alas also for the severity with which the untempted censure even the penitent victims of temptation! Such censures are not seldom founded rather on human dogmas, than on any divine revelations. If he who forsakes the error of his ways, has been assured by the Supreme Judge that the gates of mercy shall be thrown open to him, who shall presume to close them on such a transgressor, because he has failed to exhibit all the compunctious mourning prescribed by some favourite theory of repentance? Though Newton did not smite upon his breast, nor put sackcloth and ashes under him on the remembrance of his slave-trading, he yet abandoned the practice itself, and gravely, though composedly, condemned it. When summoned to the bar of the House of Lords as a witness, he censured, without reserve, in his old age, the pursuits of his youth, and contributed, by his evidence, to prevent the crimes to which he had given too much countenance by his confessions, as well as by his example. He thus entitled himself, if not to applause or sympathy, at least to absolution.

To the hard texture of Newton's mind must be ascribed much of the force, as well as most of the faults, of his character, and much of the success of his apostolate. It was his province to work at the foundations of a great and necessary reform in the spirit of the Established Church of England. His weapon, therefore, was the pickaxe of the builder, rather than the chisel of the sculptor; or, in the dialect of his

original calling, he had need, not for the delicate touch which regulates the time-keeper, but for the brawny arm which turns the windlass. The bark of Peter was at that time deeply embedded in the mud banks of a somnolent orthodoxy; but when she was well afloat, under the pilotage of Newton and his brethren, he shaped a steady course, and without shifting a sail pursued his way to his destined harbour. Or, to drop these nautical figures, when Newton had gathered from the Bible that creed, for which the instructions of Whitfield had prepared him, he clung to it till his last breath with unabated hardihood, sincerity, and courage. Never molested by any speculative doubts, never depressed by any melancholy misgivings, never embarrassed by the refinements of the outer world, he took his stand with firmness, and then advanced with decision, at the command of his own understanding, at the bidding of his own conscience, and at the impulse of his own heart. For, having consecrated these and all his faculties to the service of God, he lived in the joyful conviction of the continual presence of that infallible guide. A century of learned investigation would have availed him infinitely less than this resolute fidelity to his own nature. Prayer, obedience, practical wisdom, contemplative wisdom, and again prayer, each producing and reproducing the other, became the unbroken routine of his life, a circle ever revolving with a still wider range and a more brilliant radiance. Looking upward, and moving onward, he passed by the critics and philosophers, the worldly great, and the worldly wise, as so many busy idlers, who might impede, but who could not advance, the one great object of his renovated existence. To raise aloft the banner of the cross, that men might look to

it and be saved, — to exhibit Christ as the alpha and omega of his ministrations, — to inculcate this 'foolishness' as the one true wisdom, — to trample on all wisdom at variance with this, as but so much gaudy foolishness,—to derive all motives to holiness, all consolation, fortitude, energy, and peace from that one central source of light and love, — to unfold the mystery of a living union with that living head, — to irradiate with the bright beams of the Sun of Righteousness, all the dark questions which perplex the intellect of fallen man, and all the still darker inquiries which press with so heavy a burden on his heart,—to be, in short, in all the comprehensive fulness of the words, a preacher of the Gospel—such was the purpose which, without pause or faltering, occupied, during more than half a century, the soul of John Newton.

To this arduous task, he brought no exquisite or remarkable abilities. His writings are characterised by a rich unction of Christian kindness, by plain sound sense, by a perspicuous and easy style, and by the natural bloom which always adorns the genuine fruits of the personal experience, and the unborrowed reflection, of any shrewd observer of human affairs. Cecil, a friendly and most competent critic, says of his preaching, that 'he appeared perhaps to least advantage in the pulpit, as he did not generally aim at accuracy in the composition of his sermons, nor to any address in the delivery of them. His utterance was far from clear, and his attitudes ungraceful.' To these faults he frequently added the intolerable error of preaching without premeditation. What, then, is the ground on which a place can be assigned to John Newton, amongst those whose memory ought to outlive the age to which they belonged?

His title to a niche in the temple of fame rests on

the great effects which many of the best and most observant of his contemporaries ascribed to the energy, the decision, and the singleness of heart, with which he laboured among them. The promise to the Father of the Faithful, that the doomed city should be spared, if ten righteous men could be found in it, was an intimation to him and to his descendants, that the united efforts of even so small a number of such men would have rendered impossible the wide-spread depravity of which the cry had ascended up to Heaven. For, however deadly may be the contagion propagated by those who go hand in hand to work wickedness, the sympathetic influence of the smallest band, inflexibly devoted to any wise and holy enterprise, is more active still. The greater frequency of associations for evil than for good, and their more extensive results, attest the superior strength of the inducements to form them, not their superior strength when actually formed. Who can assign a limit to the dominion over the selfish, inert, and sensual mass, even of a solitary mind, when wrought up to a great and immutable resolve, although it be armed with no other authority than that which God himself, by evident tokens, commits to all his appointed missionaries? The history of all the great moral renovations of any large bodies of mankind is indeed nothing else than a series of the biographies of men bearing a general resemblance to John Newton. Among congregations which adhered to the church and to the ritual of their forefathers, he assumed the office, which had been discharged with far higher powers, and much more conspicuous success, by Whitfield, among the enraptured crowds which hung upon his lips. Newton lived to see his pulpit surrounded by the adult grandchildren of his first hearers, and the

tradition of his doctrine, his piety, and his undeviating perseverance, is a part of the inheritance of many who at this day stand at the distance of several descents from them. In the genealogy which connects the spiritual ancestry of his age with their spiritual progeny in our own, he holds an eminent place. Himself the child of Whitfield, he was one of the progenitors of Claudius Buchanan, to whom the Church in India owes so large a debt of gratitude — of William Wilberforce, to whom the Church Universal is still more largely indebted — of Joseph Milner, whom he induced to write the 'History of the Church' of ancient times — and of Thomas Scott, who has bequeathed to the Church, in ages yet to come, writings of imperishable value, and the memory of a life passed in no unsuccessful emulation of those of whom this unhallowed world was the least worthy.

Thomas, the tenth child of John Scott, a grazier in Lincolnshire, was born in February 1747. After passing five years to little profit at a grammar school at Scorton, in that county, he was apprenticed to a medical practitioner. From that service he was dismissed for some unexplained, but 'gross' misconduct. At the age of sixteen he returned home and passed the nine following years in 'the most laborious and dirty parts of the grazier's business.' The hope that he should one day inherit the farm on which he worked, sustained him under these toils, until he accidentally discovered that his father had made a will, disposing of it in favour of another of his sons. To escape the necessity of passing his life in menial employments as a shepherd or herdsman, Thomas Scott forthwith applied himself with vigour to regain and to enlarge such knowledge of Greek and Latin as he had acquired at school. Undeterred by the

difficulties which so often seem to forbid, while they really promote, the success of a poor, unaided, solitary student, he mastered many classical, and some theological, books. Among the last was a Socinian Commentary on the Bible. This 'poison he drank greedily,' and became 'nearly a Socinian and Pelagian, and wholly an Arminian.'

With this amount of preparation, and in this state of religious belief, Mr. Scott became a deacon of the Church of England in March 1773, by the 'laying on of the hands' of the then Bishop of Lincoln. The story of his life, from that epoch, occupies nearly 500 pages of a volume, written by his son, with such filial piety, such guileless simplicity of heart, and so much deep and unostentatious wisdom, as to give it a place among those books which suspend the critical spirit of the reader during his progress, and leave his thirst for intercourse with the writer unsatiated to the end. Yet seldom has a less eventful tale been told. The external incidents of it may all be comprised in one brief paragraph.

Mr. Scott became curate of Stoke Goldingham, in Buckinghamshire, where he married Mrs. Jane Kell, who bore him a numerous offspring. From Stoke Goldingham, he removed to Ravenstone, from Ravenstone to Weston, and from Weston to Olney, all adjacent parishes in the same county, in each of which successively, he held the office of curate. After passing more than thirteen years in these services, he was appointed to preach at a chapel, attached to a hospital, then standing in Grosvenor Place, where he laboured during the next seventeen years. In that interval death deprived him of his wife, but the benignity of Providence directed him to another wise and happy marriage. He was presented,

in 1803, to the rectory of Ashton Sandford, in Buckinghamshire, and died there in April 1821.

He died unknown, even by name, to all, or nearly to all, of the statesmen and warriors, to whose glory the annals of the reign of George III. are dedicated, although no one of that illustrious band had really hewn out for himself a monument so sublime and imperishable. He died unknown or unheeded by the poets, the philosophers, the historians, and the artists, who, during the same momentous era, had established an intellectual sovereignty in his native land, although he had laid the basis of a wider and more enduring dominion than had been acquired by the most triumphant of their number. He died neglected, if not despised, by the hierarchy of the Church of England, although in him she lost a teacher, weighed against whom those most reverend, right reverend, very reverend, and venerable personages, if all thrown together into the opposing scale, would at once have kicked the beam. But he died amidst the regrets, and yet lives in the grateful remembrance, of numbers without number, who, on either side of the Atlantic (in continental, as well as in insular Britain), had found in his writings such a mass of diversified instruction, such stores of intellectual and of spiritual nutriment, such completeness and maturity of divine knowledge, so steady and so pure a light to lighten the dark places of Holy Scripture, so absolute a devotedness to truth, and so indefatigable a pursuit of truth, as they had not found in any or in all of the theologians who wrote or spake in his own times, and in his own mother tongue.

Panting to emerge from the mean pursuits to which he had been born and bred, and deluded by sophistries then generally prevalent, Mr. Scott had, with the

most solemn vows, declared his unconditional assent and consent to the creeds, the articles, and the liturgy of the Anglican Church, although he had rejected more than one of the doctrines which those formulas represent as fundamental;—doubtless a great offence, which no true disciple of his would ever excuse or palliate, and which it is impossible to reprobate more strongly than in the terms of his own public self-condemnation. The dominion of Pelagius, Socinus, and Arminius over him, was however but short-lived. They abdicated it in favour of their rivals, Augustine, Athanasius, and Calvin; and, under the title of 'The Force of Truth,' Scott published a narrative of this interior revolution, which is extolled by Dr. Wilson, the present Bishop of Calcutta, as only second, and as scarcely inferior, in value, to the confessions of the great Bishop of Hippo. A venturous eulogium; but it may be safely said that the book is a luminous and dispassionate portraiture of a series of mental phenomena of rare occurrence, of deep interest, and of such a character, that no man could have been the subject of them, without the severest integrity, nor the delineator of them, without singular perspicacity and force of mind.

In this remarkable volume, Scott sketches himself at his original curacy in no very attractive colours — as a needy, proud, morose, and ambitious churchman, negligent even of the forms of private devotion, and wrapt up in those learned inquiries, from which he hoped at some future time to gather literary fame and professional advancement. It happened that the mortal illnesses of two of his parishioners had failed to draw this eager student from his books; but Newton had found his way from his parsonage at Olney to their bed-sides, with ghostly advice and consolation.

Scott listened meekly to the rebukes which this contrast drew upon him from his own conscience. He sought the society of his more zealous neighbour, and even became an occasional attendant at his church. But he attended it in vain. On one of those occasions Newton had selected, as the subject of his discourse, St. Paul's denunciation of the sorcerer Elymas, and Scott was moved to irresistible merriment, by the belief that the preacher was aiming his uncharitable and pointless shafts at himself, as the 'child of the devil, full of all subtlety and mischief.' Yet revering the honesty of his supposed censor, and assured of his own superiority as a controversialist and a scholar, Scott challenged him to a written debate on their religious differences. The proposal was wisely declined. Newton estimated theological debate at its true value, and perhaps had the discretion to perceive his own comparative poverty in the weapons of that warfare, and his unskilfulness in the use of them. He therefore encountered the argumentative letters of his antagonist by courteous and affectionate answers. He wisely judged that in the field of polemics, that rude and haughty spirit would have been exasperated into error; but he perceived that it was united to an uprightness and a courage which, in the quiet ways of secluded meditation, might guide him peacefully to the knowledge and to the love of truth.

This friendly anticipation was soon verified. Scott received an offer of preferment. He had thirsted and laboured for it, but nothing could tempt him to set his hand again to a confession from which his heart dissented. He chose to remain a necessitous curate, rather than to become a rich but hypocritical incumbent. He has not explained, and it is vain to con-

jecture, how he so nearly approached, without reaching the inference, that the same principle demanded the abandonment of his poor curacy also, and of his clerical rank and office. But blessings on him who gives us an example of genuine integrity, even though it be not absolutely self-consistent. In his own time, and by his own connexions, his refusal of preferment was condemned, not as an incomplete sacrifice, but as a feeble scrupulosity. From the sting of that censure he knew how to extract a salutary truth. In his self-communings on the subject, he inquired why he should receive any human authority as the foundation of any part of his religious creed, when, upon a point of moral obligation so incomparably more simple, they who loved him best, and whom he best loved, could fall into an error so obvious and so profound. He turned away from his well-meaning, but ill-judging advisers, with a solemn resolution that he would 'search the word of God with the single intention to discover whether the articles of the Church of England in general were or were not agreeable to the Scriptures.'

The history of that search occupies the larger part of 'The Force of Truth.' It was pursued during three successive years in retirement, and almost in solitude. The Bible lay continually open on his table. Day by day, and hour by hour, he implored the Divine Author of it to become also the infallible interpreter. From page to page, and from sentence to sentence, he searched, weighed, and collated every word with unremitting diligence and inextinguishable ardour. He does not seem to have armed himself with any critical apparatus, or to have sought the assistance of any human commentators. He had rejected the authority of all men over his faith, and

therefore of these men. Yet he was not wholly unaided by theological advisers. He summoned to his succour a series of writers, of whose works it seems strange that he should till then have been ignorant. They are among the most trite and popular in our language.

First came Locke, with his 'Essay on the Reasonableness of Christianity,' which only supplied Scott with arguments in favour of his Socinian, or, in more modern phrase, his rationalistic errors. Then Burnet's 'Pastoral Care' sent him back to the study of the Scriptures, not without an awful rebuke for his past negligence as a minister of the Gospel. Tillotson and Jortin next presented themselves, to teach (as we are told) neither law nor gospel, but a compromise of both, and tempted him, too successfully, to the indolent practice of transcribing their sermons for his own pulpit. Soame Jenyngs, with his 'Internal Evidences,' broke up in his soul an hitherto undiscovered depth of religious feeling, which Dr. Samuel Clarke contributed again to close up, by his 'Scriptural Doctrine of the Trinity.' For although Clarke refuted the dogmas of Socinus, he substituted for them the errors of Arius, from which Scott afterwards perceived there was a straight, and only not inevitable, descent to Atheism. The mystic Law, in his 'Serious Call,' taught our inquirer the need of a more earnest diligence, and a more profound devotion than he had hitherto practised, and drew from him a vow, which, to his latest hour, he preserved inviolate, 'never more to engage in any pursuit not evidently subservient to his ministerial usefulness, or to the propagation of Christianity.'

But, last of all, there appeared in Scott's secret chamber one, before whose majestic presence Locke

and Burnet, Tillotson and Jortin, Jenyngs, Clarke, and Law, retreated into obscurity and silence, like the interlocutors in the Platonic dialogue, when the voice of Socrates is heard. With his 'Sermon on Justification,' the great and judicious Hooker put to flight, at once and for ever, the more oppressive doubts which had overshadowed the mind of the student, and enabled him to plant his foot immoveably on Luther's rock, *stantis aut cadentis ecclesiæ.* He was at once astonished and delighted to find that the great adversary of the Puritans, the illustrious champion of the polity of the Church of England, had announced that doctrine with as full an emphasis, and with as fearless an unreserve, as the German Reformer, and as the founders of Methodism.

Up to this period, Scott had never seen the Homilies of that Church, which her Thirty-fifth Article declares to contain 'a godly and wholesome doctrine.' He read them with eagerness and with surprise, for they completely echoed the voices of Luther, of Hooker, and of Whitfield. Convinced, yet shrinking from the public avowal of his convictions, he opportunely met with one of the works of Henry Venn, who taught him (what no man had a better title, or more ability, to teach) the contempt of every motive which would, for one hour, delay the amplest acknowledgment of any part of any of the truths which his Saviour had lived to proclaim, and had died to establish.

And now the Socinian had adopted the Creed of Nicæa, the Pelagian had admitted that, unaided by divine grace, every thought and desire of the heart was immersed in an utter and hopeless corruption, and the Formalist was convinced that the justification of sinful man is produced by faith alone, without the

works either of the ceremonial or of the moral law. Thus the entire system, then and since distinguished as 'Evangelical,' had gained possession of his mind. But he drew back from the belief that, notwithstanding the stupendous and unutterable mercy of the Incarnation of Deity itself, a comparatively small number only of the race whose nature was thus assumed by their Creator, had, by his irreversible decree, been elected, to the exclusion of all the rest, and predestined, not only to eternal happiness, but to an incapacity of forfeiting that inestimable privilege. He attained, however, to this belief also, by the devout study of the sacred oracles; although, in this inquiry, he accepted the aid of two writers, each of whom must have regarded the other as a kind of hopeless riddle, if they could have read each other's books. These were Lipsius, the grave expositor of the 'Economy of the Covenants,' and Harvey, the efflorescent author of 'Theron and Aspasio.'

The whole cycle of doctrine was now complete, and, ever faithful to the light which he possessed, Scott enforced his new tenets from his own pulpit, and sat as a child, to receive a more perfect exposition of them from the lips of Newton. Nearly half a century of apostolic labour lay before him. During that period he continued to search and to ponder the Scriptures with an intensity of application, and a perseverance of prayer, of which the records of our own age and country afford no counterpart. The result was but to add to the stability of the convictions he had derived from his early studies. As the world receded from his view, he clung to them with increased tenacity, and his dying breath attested his indestructible affiance in them.

Such are the facts. They are important, chiefly

as forming the foundation of an argument, which has been very widely diffused, and cordially accepted, in favour of Mr. Scott's peculiar theological opinions. He observes that the system which he thus embraced, was in direct contradiction to his long cherished views — that his spirit and temper indisposed him to such a departure from any position which he had once deliberately taken up — that the change was hostile to his secular interests — and that it exposed him to contumelies and contempt, from which no man could shrink with a more acute sensitiveness. He remarks that this change in his opinions took place very gradually — that it was not preceded or accompanied by any instruction from those to whose sentiments he acceded — that the only uninspired books which he consulted were those of writers of high reputation in the Church of England — that he was indebted for his opinions to the study of the Scriptures, incomparably more than to all other studies — and that he read them with fervent and unceasing prayer for the right understanding of them. He very solemnly denies that his narrative is clouded by any enthusiastic dreams or illusions, or that it is more or less than a plain record of so many real occurrences. Hence he infers that the conclusions to which he attained, must necessarily be just and true; an inference irresistibly following (as he conceives) from the enormous impieties with which the denial of it is pregnant.

For, if a man devoted to the pursuit of truth, sacrificing his fondest prejudices, his interest, and his reputation, for the love of truth — labouring intensely during three successive years, by night and by day, for the discovery of truth — taking the word of God as his only authoritative expositor of truth, and

studying that word with earnest and habitual prayer for the attainment of truth — if such a man shall be at last left under any grave and dangerous error, how escape the revolting consequence, that we may ask and not receive — seek and not find — knock without having the door opened — sue for bread, and receive a stone — be disappointed in the confidence we are taught to repose in our Heavenly Father — and find even the divine promises an insecure foundation of our hopes? 'Can any man,' exclaims Mr. Scott, 'suppose that after such repeated and continual pleadings of the express promises of the Lord to this effect, in earnest prayer, according to his appointment, I should be delivered up to the teaching of the father of lies? Can any one make this conclusion without an evident insinuation that God hath broken his promises?'

Taunt a Roman Catholic with his doctrine of infallibility, and he answers that his creed confines that awful prerogative to the Christian Church, as represented either by an œcumenical Synod, or by her supreme earthly Head; but that such Protestants as Mr. Scott, acknowledge that the number of devout persons and of infallible persons is the same, and believe that, although such persons are collectively unable to agree, they are individually unable to err. Such a disputant leaps over the dilemma of 'the force of truth,' at a single bound. He denies that Holy Scripture contains any promise of illumination, excepting of such as shall be conveyed through the appointed channels, and means of grace, in the Church. He thinks it no contradiction to the divine word, and certainly no marvel, that a man should consume a long life in isolated biblical studies, however energetic, and in solitary meditation and prayer, however

fervent, without discovering the narrow way which leads to truth and life, or escaping the broad way, which leads to error and to perdition; for such a man has rejected what his Roman Catholic antagonist maintains to be the one source of light, laid open by Heaven itself for the guidance of man.

Neither are Protestants really hedged up between the adoption of Mr. Scott's religious system, and the abandonment of their reliance on the divine promises. For they insist that all such promises are conditional, and that every promise of divine guidance is qualified by the condition, express or implied, that the search for it be made in the pure love of truth, and without the bias of any secular motive. But it is irrational to say, that Mr. Scott conducted his inquiries with this entire impartiality. He had the strongest possible inducement to get rid of his original tenets. They were utterly inconsistent with his preferment, and even with his continuance in his sacred office. He tells us that he had 'perceived his Socinian principles to be very disreputable,' and that he had been compelled 'to conceal them in a great measure.' He might have stated this much more strongly. It would not merely have been disreputable, but base and criminal, to have adhered at once to his opinions and to his profession.

Further, that search for truth, which the divine veracity is pledged to assist, is a search conducted in the use of those means which the divine beneficence has seen fit to supply. Of these not the least considerable is conference with the wise, either in their persons, or in their writings. But, during the three years of his biblical investigations, Mr. Scott seems to have withdrawn not only from all intellectual society, but from all theological reading. His whole

catalogue of auxiliary books would hardly afford serious occupation for one month to a student of ordinary diligence; and, although he afterwards extended his book knowledge more widely, he seems never to have possessed more than a very slight acquaintance with the works of any divines, ancient or modern. But he who revolves the text of Holy Scripture without informing himself how it has been interpreted by any of the great teachers of the Church, has no right to expect immunity from those errors to which we are all liable, in all our studies, and on all subjects, when we wilfully cut ourselves off from the resources of our social nature, and from a free intercourse with the minds of other men.

Mr. Scott's alternative 'think with me, or cease to believe that he who seeks shall find,' implies, or rather affirms, that none ever sought as he sought, excepting only those who concluded their search by thinking as he thought. He disposes of all experiments attended with an opposite result, by denying that they were conducted with the same good faith, simplicity of purpose, earnestness and devotion, as his own. Such inquirers as found at length any resting-place rejected by him, were, as he assures us, either persons leaning to their own understanding — or persons held in bondage by human authority — or persons incredulous of their own liability to error — or persons blinded by prejudice, or heated by controversy — or persons whose dissent from his own conclusions touches only points of minor importance, that is, does not encroach on any part of his system, excepting that which relates to the predestination and final perseverance of the chosen few. Now it is a matter of fact, clear and indisputable, that a vast company of those who have

been honoured in the Christian Churches, as worthies of the highest name, lived and died in a faith far more remote than this from the faith of Thomas Scott. But it is a mere matter of conjecture, admitting of no proof whatever, that all of these persons were justly liable to some one or more of the imputations thus cast upon them. And it is a most improbable conjecture. Can any one be named, who held and taught all Mr. Scott's doctrines, among the throng of saints, and martyrs, and confessors, who flourished between the days of Clement of Rome and those of Augustin? Can we ascribe the belief of them to any of those who have been most illustrious for piety in the Roman Catholic communion, as, for example, to St. Bernard, to Savonarola, to St. Charles Boromeo, to St. Francis De Sales, to Pascal, to De Saci, or to Fénélon? Must we conclude that, in their biblical inquiries, all these illustrious men were either indevout, or presumptuous, or hasty, or bigoted, or arrogant, or prejudiced, or contentious? Are we to refuse assent to the overwhelming and undisputed evidence on which we have hitherto assigned to each of them a place amongst the most learned, devoted, and reverential lovers and worshippers of divine truth? Had Mr. Scott any such acquaintance with the lives or the writings of the primitive Fathers, or of the modern Catholics, as entitled him to pronounce this indiscriminate censure on them all? Is it not rather the fact, that when he wrote that censure, he was wholly unacquainted with the books of any of them, and with the very names of most of them?

What, then, is the right inference from the incontrovertible facts, that during three successive years Mr. Scott laboured devoutly and energetically to

deduce from the Bible the genuine articles of the Christian faith, and that those labours rendered him an immutable adherent of the system called Evangelical? The right inference, we apprehend, is, that in that system is contained whatever was necessary to his peace, to his holiness, and to his eternal welfare. For they who seek shall find. They shall find those practical truths which are essential to their highest good, although they may miss of some abstract truths, which lie within the domain of science rather than of practice. In one sense, indeed, each article of the 'Evangelical' creed, and of every other creed, must either be an absolute truth, or an absolute untruth. But such articles are contemplated by the several adherents or opponents of them, in so many contrary aspects, with such various prepossessions, with so different an use and understanding of words, and with habits of thought so dissimilar, that there is another sense in which such articles may be said to be relatively true, and relatively false — true to one man, false to another. Many agree in the use of a common symbol, who have yet no meaning in common. Many between whom there is no external uniformity, are living in a substantial unanimity. Amidst the mists which envelope us in this life, many opposite deductions have been made from Holy Scripture, by men who in that other life, where such mists are dispersed, have doubtless discovered how much our world is agitated by debates, in which nothing is in fact at issue — how much disturbed by controversialists between whom no real difference exists — and how much occupied by questions which might be decided either way without affecting any vital principle of the religion to which they relate.

But whatever authority Mr. Scott's studies and

prayers may or may not have imparted to his opinions, they undoubtedly formed the origin of his future pursuits, and the basis of his eminence, as the great Scriptural Commentator of his age. If regarded only in a commercial point of view, the story of his biblical labours would form a curious addition to the chronicle of the 'calamities of authors.'

There was, it seems, in Scott's early days, a publisher whose name moulders in well-merited oblivion, but whose trading capital consisted in his own unblushing effrontery, and in the command which it gave him over the types, the paper, the ink, and the brains of his credulous neighbours. It occurred to this worthy that a series of weekly annotations on the Bible, from the pen of Mr. Scott, in one hundred successive numbers, would yield a handsome profit to himself, and that the annotator would be splendidly recompensed by the receipt of the same number of guineas. Some well-fed authors of our own times may think that a payment of fifty-two pounds ten shillings in each of two successive years, was but a niggardly recompense for such labours. Mr. Scott judged otherwise. It was an addition of fifty per cent. to the annual income which he earned by officiating four times every Sunday in two churches, between which he had fourteen miles to walk, and by ministering on every other day of the week to the patients at a hospital.

Accordingly, in the year 1788, he sat him down to the composition of his weekly commentaries. The world had cordially welcomed the first fifteen numbers, when the crafty bibliopole announced that the work must be abandoned, unless the author could borrow from his friends, and transfer to him, the sum of 500*l*. These hard terms having been complied with,

the book was finished in 174 numbers, for which the commentator received 164 guineas. Then the bookseller became bankrupt, leaving poor Scott to repay the money he had borrowed for his use. A second bookseller purchased the stock of the insolvent, reprinted a large part of it, but refused to account for a shilling of the profits. Rescued by the Court of Chancery from the grasp of this pirate, Scott next braved the perils of becoming his own bookseller, and, after printing two editions of five quarto volumes, and 'scarcely clearing more than the prime cost,' surrendered himself to fate and Paternoster Row, and sold the copyright. At this passage of the tragedy, the stage is darkened by the re-appearance of the Lord Chancellor, at one time fulminating injunctions, at another recalling his own thunderbolts in a manner altogether terrific and inexplicable. At length we reach the catastrophe. It presents to us Thomas Scott, under the accumulated burdens of sixty-seven years, of sickness, and of poverty, investigating his accounts, and ascertaining that 199,900*l.* had been 'paid in his lifetime across the counter' for his theological publications — that he had himself derived from them an income of a little more than 47*l.* per annum — that they had involved him in a debt of about 1200*l.* — and that all his worldly wealth consisted of a warehouse-full of unsaleable theology. Agitated, alarmed, and distressed, but never desponding, he at length, for the first time, invokes the aid of his friends and fellow-labourers, among whom the large-souled Charles Simeon first answers the appeal with affectionate greetings, with numerous orders for his books, and with a remittance of 560*l.* for his relief. Others rapidly follow this good example, and within two months the warehouse is

emptied of its contents, and the great commentator finds himself possessed of more than 2000*l*. With his debts paid, his cares dispersed, his heart warmed to his brethren, and his trust in God justified, the curtain falls on the brave old man applying himself to a new edition of his work, and toiling with all the vigour of youth to compile a new concordance, by which he hopes to emulate and to supersede the vast compilation of Cruden.

Sore vexations doubtless! A rebuke, not altogether unmerited, of that amiable inconsistency which, while in deference to a 'remorseless logic' it depicted in the darkest colours the utter depravity of the whole race of man, could see in each individual of it nothing but truth, honour, and integrity personified! But what, after all, were such vexations to Thomas Scott? Of what account were swindlers, blunderers, and suits in Chancery to him, or what cared he even for sickness, penury, and distress? The volume for the elucidation of which he lived, had imparted to him that self-sovereignty which the Porch so vainly promised. Animated by one changeless purpose,—devoted to one inexhaustible task, never undertaken but to be finished, never finished but to be resumed,—governed by a creed to which, in each succeeding year, he clung more firmly,—rejoicing in the tranquil assurance, that by a divine decree eternal happiness was his indefeasible inheritance,—blest with a resoluteness of understanding which turned aside from no difficulty, and with a mental energy which trampled down the whole brood of doubts, sophisms, and delusions,—and sustained by a vigour of body which baffled all fatigue and triumphed over all disease,—on he went interpreting the word of his God, and onward he could not but go, though

'fractus illabatur orbis,' — though publishers should cheat, and chancellors restrain him, — though asthma should choke, and fever unnerve him, — though want should hang on him heavily, and critics censure, and congregations desert him, — and though the wife of his bosom should be taken from him. It mattered not. These things could not move him, nor prevent his writing and enlarging, and yet again enlarging, his Commentary. He might safely have challenged the world to produce a more unfortunate, or a more enviable man.

Enviable for many reasons, and not least so (it is but a seeming contradiction), because he brought to his task neither the intellectual powers, nor the intellectual wealth, which we are most accustomed to admire. In his mental economy, imagination existed only as a negative quantity, and, therefore, invention, pathos, vehemence, ardour, and all the other forms of eloquence, were foreign alike to his pen and to his lips. No exact knowledge of Hebrew, Greek, or Latin, no familiarity with the literature or the languages of modern Europe, no patristic or mediæval learning, no skill in geography, chronology, political or natural history, no mastery of any moral or political science, and no penetrating critical acumen, conducted him though the codes or the annals of the Hebrew theocracy, or illuminated his path amidst the aphorisms, the prophecies, or the mythic intimations of their inspired writers, or enabled him to unravel and to complete the elliptical statements, the suggestive reasoning, and the obscure allusions which more or less darken all the Apostolic Scriptures, and especially such of them as have been thrown into the epistolary form.

But in this poverty he found his wealth, and illus-

triously vindicated, in his own person, the bold paradox, 'when I am weak then am I strong.' He proposed to himself a canon of biblical criticism more perfect than any which had been followed by Origen, Jerome, Erasmus, or Beza. Believing God to be the common Father of us all, and the Word of God to be the common patrimony of all His children, he was assured that the real meaning of it must have been placed within the reach, not only of the learned few, but also of the unlearned many. But how (he inquired) should that book, which was so often found by the wise to be sealed and inscrutable, be thus intelligible to the simple? He returned the answer to his own inquiry. God is truth, and his word is truth, and all truth must be consistent with itself. He, therefore, who shall diligently, humbly, and devoutly collate every passage of the divine oracles with the rest, will possess himself of the key to that inexhaustible treasury, and, in proportion to the constancy with which he shall repeat this process, will the clearer pages of the Bible illuminate for him those which are more obscure, until a reflected and continually expanding light shall have shed its beams over the whole of the inspired canon.

Mr. Scott's efforts to elucidate the sacred text by the juxtaposition and comparison of the various parts of it with each other, were such that a review of them must affect any ordinary student with shame and admiration. It is scarcely possible to count, and it is vain to conjecture, the number of the illustrations of the sense of scriptural words and phrases with which this method furnished him. The labour expended in collecting, verifying, and arranging them all, must have oppressed any mind of less than herculean vigour. Yet this was but one, and not the most arduous, of the many em-

ployments to which he devoted the scanty leisure allowed to him by the daily and severe pressure of his pastoral and domestic duties. That leisure was chiefly dedicated to the exposition of the truths, and to the enforcement of the practical lessons, which he had extracted from the inspired writings by his indefatigable collation of every part of them.

They who shall judge Mr. Scott's Commentary on the Bible as a work of art, or by those rules which literary artists inculcate and observe, will not pronounce a favourable, and hardly a tolerant, decision. He often wrote with a haste fatal at once to the maturity and to the methodical arrangement of his thoughts. 'I have actually known him,' (says his son,) 'with great difficulty and suffering, prepare as much copy as he thought would complete the current number, then, when he had retired to bed and taken an emetic, called up again to furnish more, what he had provided being insufficient for his purpose.' It is not permitted to any human being to give birth to any mental offspring after so short a gestation, without consigning it to an existence which must long be precarious, even though it be eventually protracted by the vigour of the natural constitution.

From the same biographer we learn that Mr. Scott 'was compelled, in the first instance,' 'to give the result of his own reflections almost alone, there being little time to consult, much less to transcribe, from other authors.' This exclusive reliance on his own resources brought with it the inevitable results of want of method, of tautology, and of a sameness in the staple of thought, attesting the common origin of all the successive pages. Thus tediousness became the besetting sin, not only of the entire work, but of almost every part and member of it. The unbroken

monotony of the style, and the lowness of that uniform level, is maintained throughout six quarto volumes, with scarcely one passing attempt to bestow on any single passage any of the warmth, the vivacity, or the other embellishments which habit has rendered so familiar to us all, as to have almost elevated them to the class of necessaries. Dulness is the one unpardonable crime of authorship. Nor can the most zealous of Mr. Scott's admirers deny that his pen has much to answer for on that score. Hence it has come to pass that this vast biblical Thesaurus, though the greatest theological performance of our age and country, has never enjoyed, and can never attain, popularity, excepting with those who consult and study it in the same grave, devout, and practical spirit in which it was written. In proportion as that sacred harmony exists between the commentator and his readers, is the reverence and the attachment with which they follow his guidance; nor would it be easy to form for any student of the Bible a better wish, than that he might drink so deeply of Mr. Scott's spirit, as to lose the power of perceiving his defects, and the disposition to censure them.

Any such censure would, indeed, be most unreasonable, if not qualified by a cordial acknowledgment of the merits of that most elaborate commentary. The style if heavy, is at least plain, clear, and unambitious. If there is not in those six volumes, a solitary sentence which could be quoted as an example of pathetic, fervent, or felicitous composition, it is equally true that they might be searched in vain for a sentence put together for effect, or merely interstitial and unmeaning. They are not only replete with thought, but with a greater amount of solid and indigenous thought, than perhaps any other man ever accumu-

lated in the solitary and unaided exercise of his own powers of meditation. There they stand, and shall stand for generations yet to come, those bulky tomes! a huge Cyclopean mass, defying alike the laws of architecture and the tooth of time; a vast artificial quarry, from which inferior builders may be supplied with materials already wrought and shaped for their puny edifices; a capacious tank, irrigating the whole thristy neighbourhood. True they are embellished by no delicate workmanship or superfluous ornament, and have nothing to satisfy a refined and elegant taste. But let the reader of them believe, as the writer of them believed, that the words on which he commented were, in the exact and literal sense, the very words of God himself — that they form the voice, and the only voice, by which the silence between Heaven and earth has ever been broken — that they contain the history which alone discloses the awful origin of our race, and the single prophecy which reveals our still more awful destiny, and the immutable law of our hidden, as well as of our external life, and the great charter of our salvation; — let the reader implore, as his teacher himself implored, the illumination of every chamber of his soul by rays of light, diverging from every page of that holy volume; — let him labour, as his teacher laboured, to penetrate to the deepest and the richest ores deposited in those inexhaustible mines of wisdom, — and then he will perceive and feel that Thomas Scott, the comparatively unlearned, the positively unskilful, and the superlatively unamusing commentator, has descended further into the meaning of the sacred oracles, and has been baptized more copiously into their spirit, than the most animated, and ingenious, and accomplished of his competitors.

This saturation of the comment by the spirit of the text is the true and characteristic merit of Mr. Scott's *exegesis*. Except by having the Bible by heart, or in the heart, it would be impossible for any uninspired man to take a view so wide in its range, and so boundless in its variety, of the position of the people of Christ, as betrayed by a corrupt nature, environed by temptations, beset by dangers, deluded by self-deceits, assailed by the powers of darkness, and, in the midst of all the affections and employments, the joys and the sorrows, of life, continually summoned to exercises of duty and of self controul. No man, unless so qualified, could have produced so comprehensive a development of the relations between Deity, contemplated in a unity of essence and a trinity of persons, and man, contemplated as the object of His creative, redeeming, and sanctifying energy; or of the relations subsisting between different men, contemplated as members of one spiritual body; or of the claims, the obligations, and the privileges resulting from all those relations at once so awful, so mysterious, and so inextricably complicated with each other. Without the use of scientific formularies, he has thus brought together a complete body of divinity. Without aspiring to logical exactness, he has compiled a complete system of ethics. Without affecting the character of a philosopher, he has solved most of the familiar, and some of the more recondite problems of moral, social, and political philosophy. His great difficulty was, and wonderful are the efforts with which he encountered it, to revolve through every part of this mighty orbit with an eye at once steadfastly compassing the whole, keeping in view the connection of the several parts, and surveying each in its due subordination to the rest.

The biblical spirit of Mr. Scott's mind placed him

at the distance of the poles from the neologists of a later day. He accepted every word of either Testament with the same prostrate reverence of soul with which the author of the Apocalypse bowed himself down when 'he heard the voice saying to him, "Come up hither, and I will show thee things which must be hereafter."' The doctors of Germany, and those other doctors by whom Oxford is now replacing her Anglo-Catholic professors of divinity, must of course look down from their cloudy tabernacles with pity, if not with contempt, on Thomas Scott, as he submissively plods his way along the ancient paths with an unhesitating belief in the literal and plenary inspiration of every word of each of the sixty-six books, which collectively we call the Bible. His great work will, indeed, be consigned by such critics to the limbo of empty toils, and ponderous vanities. But in bar of that judgment his advocates will plead that the Bible, as expounded by the all-believing Thomas Scott, left on his heart and life a more vivid image of Him who is the alpha and the omega of those sacred writings, than was ever impressed on any half-believing, half-rejecting, interpreter, who has pyrrhonised them into a series of mythes—that the disciples of Scott have borne the same similitude more vividly than any who have sat at the feet of our neologian Gamaliels—and that no ordinary presumption arises in favour of the superiority of that spiritual culture which has thus yielded fruits of so much greater excellence.

Mr. Scott did not live to finish his Concordance, though he published many other books. They consisted chiefly of sermons or of homiletical essays, designed to guide the conscience and the conduct, and to regulate the affections, of those who, with or without reason, call and profess themselves Christians.

These publications might pass for so many fragments accidentally broken off from the author's great work, for they have the same general character. But in his later years he changed his theological pursuits and style, and presented himself to the world as a controversialist, and an ecclesiastical historian.

His antagonist was Dr. Prettyman Tomline, successively tutor, secretary, and biographer of William Pitt, Bishop of Lincoln, and Bishop of Winchester — a studious pains-taking man, the spoilt child of fortune, who bestowed on him boundless wealth and dignity; but less favoured by nature, who refused him the eminence to which he aspired in letters and theology. The mitre of Wykeham and of Andrews could not rescue him from a wearisome, lethargic mediocrity. As far as his acceptance at the temple of fame is concerned, arrogance, impertinence, blundering, or heresy, would have been more venial faults.

After long research, the bishop had convinced himself, and undertook to convince the world, that the doctrines of election, predestination, and final perseverance, with other cognate tenets, composing, collectively, the Calvinistic system, were novelties of the Church of Geneva, and were not to be found either in Holy Writ, or in the works of any of the Fathers, or Doctors of the Church, before John Calvin. To this episcopal 'refutation of Calvinism' Mr. Scott opposed two octavo volumes of 'Remarks,' in which the speculations and the narrative of the prelate are encountered front to front, as subversive not only of the institutes of the Swiss reformer, but of the foundations of the Christian faith. No final adjustment of this high debate is ever to be expected; nor is there the reasonable prospect even of an approach to such an adjustment, until it shall be transferred from the field of

divinity, to the more appropriate arena of moral philosophy. The inspired writers teach morals, not moral science. They proceed on popular assumptions, and make an unrestrained use of popular language. They keep as far aloof from ontology and psychology as from astronomy and optics. Their object is only to purify, and to save, the soul. The meaner office of explaining the secrets of nature, material or immaterial, they abandon to the schools. A man may be a perfect textuary, though altogether destitute of physics or metaphysics.

Heedless, therefore, of the discord of the pulpits, we may with reasonable safety acquiesce in the prevailing opinion of the philosophers, that a subordinate intelligence may, within the limit of its powers, exercise a will perfectly free, of which nevertheless every movement may, with infallible accuracy, have been foreseen by another and superior intelligence. When the mother raises her infant to her bosom, or when the guide conducts the caravan to the fountains in the desert, they both, with unerring certainty, foresee (that is, predestinate) that the infant, or the pilgrims, will forthwith slake their thirst, the free will of either being in each case the instrument by which that foresight or predestination is verified. But if we suppose a case in which the disparity of intellect is not finite, but infinite, the prescience of such a superior as to the use which, in any given circumstances, such an inferior will make of his free will, must also be infinite. The reflection of the mother, or of the guide, and the intuitions of the Omniscient, alike accomplish their purposes, and alike fulfil their predestinations, through the agency of the volitions of the objects of their care. In a world where the whole system of life is carried

on by means of such foresights, it seems strange that we should be perplexed with the inquiry, whether a similar dominion can be exercised over us by the prescience of our Supreme Ruler, compatibly with our possession of a choice in the dilemmas to which we are continually reduced. The debate regarding predestination, would indeed have assumed far less importance in the minds of the disputants themselves, had it not been for its inevitable connexion with the far more arduous debate how to reconcile the divine perfections with the existence of sin and sorrow within any province of the divine empire. The complete solution of that inquiry is for some better and holier state than ours, in which, let us hope, that the bishop and his antagonist have long since met to discover and to adore it.

Mr. Scott's historical labours are comprised in a brief account of the acts of the Synod of Dort, in which he undertook to correct the errors into which Bishop Tomline had fallen, by relying on Heylin's abridgment of them instead of consulting the originals. To this defence of the Protestant divines of the seventeenth century, he added a confession of his own faith on the much agitated questions of the terms of religious communion, of religious liberty, and of toleration. He taught that the removal of the disabilities affecting the Roman Catholics, would be not only a great political blunder, but a grievous sin; and while he attacked Judaism in the writings of a certain Rabbi Crool, he defended Christianity against the far more celebrated Thomas Paine. Like most other voluminous authors, he also dallied with many subjects on which it was not permitted to him to enter; such, for example, as prophecy, and the Christian ministry. But no man could better afford

such disappointments. His Commentary survives him, the enduring monument to his name, or rather (for such was his own view of it) a monument which he was graciously permitted to erect, to the edification of the Church, and to the glory of her great Head, in every region of the world in which the Word of God is now studied by Englishmen or their descendants, or shall hereafter be proclaimed in their mother tongue.

The inscription on the tomb of Pope Gregory the Great, 'Implebatque actu quicquid sermone docebat,' proves, if it be true, that the great Roman Catholic Saint never taught, for it is certain that he never fulfilled, the most important of all human duties — those of parental and of conjugal life. But the virtues of Thomas Scott were exhibited in all the domestic relations, as his teaching extended to them all. He was an illustrious example of the great truth that the sublimest heights of Christian perfection are best scaled by ascending through the deepest and purest of our earthly affections to the love of God himself; and that he who turns aside from the lower, will scarcely ever rise to the more elevated, of the two 'kindred points of heaven and home.'

Yet Scott did not seem, on a casual acquaintance, well suited for the interchange of the kindly offices of domestic life. His appearance was harsh and uninviting, his features coarse, his eye lacking lustre, his gait uncouth, his voice asthmatic and dissonant, and his manner absent and inattentive, like that of a student who had been dragged by violence from his mute associates into a reluctant intercourse with his fellow-men. Nor can it be denied that his natural temper was characterised by asperity and arrogance.

In his pulpit he too often seemed to scold, and in society to dogmatise. But beneath this rough surface the seeds of every Christian grace were constantly germinating, and their energy became more and more prolific as the time drew near when they were to be transplanted into the paradise of God, there to bloom in perennial beauty.

Mr. Scott was an unpopular, and, on the whole, an unsuccessful, preacher. He trusted to one hour's peripatetic musing for the preparation of his sermons, and to the impulse of the moment for the composition of them — errors so glaring, as to derive no justification, and scarcely any apology, from any fulness of mind or powers of eloquence. But to eloquence, in any of the senses of the word, he had not the most remote claim. He found in his Bible declarations of the efficacy of preaching, and, in reliance on them, he persevered from youth to old age in delivering seldom less than three, and usually four, discourses on each Sunday, neither deterred by hostile criticism — nor disgusted by the frivolity of the fashionable triflers whose nerves he had offended — nor damped by the perversity of some of his hearers, or by the scandalous disgrace of others — nor disheartened by the gradual decline of his congregation — nor dispirited by finding himself at last the pastor of one of the most wretched of country villages, inhabited by persons little raised above pauperism, and not exceeding seventy in number. And this heroical confidence was vindicated by the event. His preaching, indeed, had no power over the multitude; but there was a little company, some of whom always sat reverently at his feet, to gather the rich ore of scriptural wisdom and ponderous sense, to which they afterwards imparted more attractive forms, and so

gave it circulation amongst auditors more fastidious than themselves, though less discerning.

Mr. Scott was not naturally a social man. His table-talk was exhilarating neither to himself nor to others, although the vigour of his mind would now and then break out into a proverbial terseness of phrase, and a homely quaintness of illustration, which had something of the character, and of the effect, of humour. His colloquial fame must rest on a very different ground. Those with whom he lived, were, in his eyes, the joint heirs with himself of the same eternal inheritance, and his associates in the same arduous probation. He therefore poured himself out in a discourse which, though thoughtful and profoundly serious, was kind and affectionate, giving assurance of the depth from which it sprang by the height at which it aimed. We have no right to expect a playful, an amusing, or a tender companion in a guardian appointed to minister to us frail mortals in our conflicts with temptation and sorrow. A compassionate and watchful kindness satisfies the duties of such a relation, and in such kindness Mr. Scott was never wanting.

He was a poor, and even a necessitous man. His annual income, professional and literary, seldom approached 200*l*., and usually amounted to but half that sum. But the great interpreter of Holy Scripture was rich in his knowledge of the full meaning of the promise which he found there — 'Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you;' and therefore he dared to cast himself and his family on the divine fidelity, rejecting preferment which his conscience forbade him to accept, and never swerving from any principle in order to propitiate the favour,

or to avert the displeasure, of the dispensers of popularity and patronage. He lived in severe frugality, in brave independence, and in a self-denying charity to those who were still poorer than himself. When he had exhausted all other means of assisting them, he stooped (it is difficult to suppose a more painful condescension) to convert his house into a sort of public kitchen, where he and his distressed neighbours could partake together of a cheap diet, purchased at their joint expense, but prepared and served at his own charge, seasoned with his cordial greeting, and animated by his wise and gracious conversation.

Around that humble board were gathered three sons and one daughter. From the same divine promise he had derived the habitual assurance (how often beyond the reach of the most affluent!) that nothing necessary for the real welfare of his children should be withholden from them. A whole library of treatises on education might be studied to less advantage than his brief and simple account of the method by which he trained them up to tread in his own footsteps. In his household, punishment, rebuke, and even direct admonition, were almost unknown. His children listened from day to day to prayers offered with seriousness and singleness of heart, and to conversation which, though not apparently, was yet studiously, directed to raise their minds to the comprehension and the love of whatsoever things are true and honest, just and pure, lovely and of good report. From day to day the tempers and the habits of their parents bore an irresistible testimony to the perfect sincerity with which those prayers were offered, and that language employed. It was a healthful moral atmosphere in which his children grew up. With

the keen instinct of their age they watched the congruity of the discourse and the conduct of their teachers. With the ductility of youth they imitated what they thus perceived to be the genuine character of their parents; and their earliest thoughts of the enjoyments and comforts of life became indestructibly associated with the remembrance of the integrity of those through whose hands those blessings were imparted to them.

Thus, rich in an imperishable faith in human piety and virtue, Mr. Scott's sons all became clergymen, and were all devoted to the diffusion of the doctrines which their father had taught. John Scott, the eldest of them, published a biography of his father. It is a narrative which probably no human being ever read without some salutary compunction. It is no monkish legend of superstitious observances, of cruel self-tormentings, or of romantic miracles. It tells of no prodigies of penitence, nor of any feats of preternatural virtue. It shows how a divine and undying light, fed by the pure word of God, and nourished by constant prayer and meditation, may shine into the heart, and illuminate the path, and gladden the humble roof and the happy household, of one of those to whom that Word is an abiding guide and comforter. It became the happy duty of his son to commemorate and to give to the world a legend of one saint at least worthy of that awful name, and to show with what force of intellect, what candour of mind, and what indefatigable diligence, he laboured to discover the whole will of God; — with what a burning zeal, and yet with what a tranquil energy, he strove to fulfil it; — how acutely he felt the troubles of life, and how bravely he endured them; — how constantly progressive, and at length how perfect, was his victory over

the faults and infirmities of his nature; — with what brotherly kindness he laboured to promote the best interests of mankind; — with what filial affiance he committed himself to the guidance of his heavenly Father; — how he sanctified all the homely offices, all the dearest relations, and all the arduous duties of domestic life; — how profound, and yet how simple, was the unadorned wisdom which flowed so copiously from his pen and from his lips; — how unaverted and how confiding was the gaze which, during fifty successive years, he fixed on the holy life, and on the atoning death, of his Saviour; — and how, in the strength of a living union with Him, he fought the good fight of faith, and then passed through the dark waters, agitated but not overwhelmed, cast down but not in despair; and at last made more than conqueror in the strength of that Divine Master, to whom his life had been consecrated, and to whom he committed his departing spirit in the sure and certain hope of a further revelation of the Divine Will, transcending, as the eternal Heavens transcend this perishing earth, that present revelation of it, which he had so laboriously studied and so devoutly loved.

Scott was not the only eminent theologian whom Newton could claim as his disciple or imitator. The work which occupied the life, and signalised the name, of Joseph Milner, originated in the example, if not in the suggestions, of the same master. Milner was the elder of the three sons of a wool-stapler at Leeds; but was educated at the University of Cambridge at the expense of a society instituted for the assistance of young students of remarkable intelligence and piety. Having been admitted into holy orders, he became one of the ministers of the High Church at Hull, and master of the endowed grammar-school

at that town. There he won for himself a permanent place in literature, and left a deep impress of his researches and opinions on the minds of his own, and of later generations.

In the course of his ministry those opinions underwent a change, which, in a brief memoir prefixed to a volume of his posthumous sermons, his surviving brother, Isaac, represented as radical and entire. It was a change which would be described, in popular language, as a passing over from the ranks of 'the orthodox' to those of 'the evangelical' clergy. For these conventional terms his biographer endeavours to substitute a more precise definition; but the readers of the memoir would seem with one voice to have declared their inability to attach any definite meaning to the explanation. The attempt was renewed still more elaborately in the second edition, but with no happier result. The fact was, that the distinction which Isaac Milner so ineffectually laboured to express, was, in theory at least, so subtle and evanescent, as to escape the bondage of any words whatever. Neither Crabbe, the synonimist, nor even Samuel Johnson, the lexicographer, could have discriminated exactly between the senses of two appellations, so equivocal in themselves, so tossed about by party spirit, and so continually shifting in their use.

The knot would perhaps have been best cut, by defining an orthodox clergyman as one who held, in dull and barren formality, the very same doctrines which the evangelical clergyman held in cordial and prolific vitality; or by saying, that they differed from each other as solemn triflers differ from the profoundly serious. It was a specific, not a generic distinction. It resulted from no assignable diversity in the elements of their respective creeds, nor

from any dissimilarity in the manner in which, in either class, those elements affected, and united with, each other; but in the degree in which they were combined in each with that caloric — the vital heat of the soul itself — which quickens into animating motives the otherwise inert and torpid mass of doctrinal opinions.

The opinions of Joseph Milner, when thus vivified, gave birth to his 'History of the Church of Christ.' To the Roman Catholic inquiry, 'Where was your religion before Luther?' no very satisfactory answer had been returned by Protestant divines. Their counter inquiry, 'Where was your face before you washed it this morning?' was but a bad argument, thrown into the form of a sorry jest. If the hands by which such ablutions be performed be rude and violent, they may so wash the face as to lacerate the epidermis; just as the hard scouring of some ancient vase may destroy incrustations coeval with the work itself. Unskilful and presumptuous hands may tear away an integral part of what they desire to amend, by mistaking it for an accidental and injurious accessary; and such is the error or the offence which the antagonists of Luther ascribe to him. They maintain that the creeds and observances of which he despoiled the Church, belonged to the remotest ecclesiastical antiquity. They call upon their opponents to specify the time anterior to Luther, when she appeared among men without them, or when she was invested with those ceremonies, and those opinions, with which his hands arrayed her. They insist that, during a period of fifteen centuries, the confession of Augsburg and the ritual of Geneva would have appeared to all Christian people as so many strange innovations. They declare that at every successive era in that long lapse of ages, the Tridentine decrees would have

sounded in Christian ears but as so many familiar expositions of established truths. They infer that there is, therefore, an irresistible presumption against the one, and in favour of the other.

John Newton undertook to refute these assertions, and the argument thus founded on them. In his ' Observations on Ecclesiastical History,' he attempted to trace the Lutheran, or ' Evangelical ' system, from the apostolic times, until it faded away before the growth of papal errors, in the sixth and following centuries. It was the deliberate judgment of his friend and critic, William Cowper, that he had proved his superiority, in some of the essential qualities of an historian, to the author of the ' Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire.' The world, however, did not affirm the sentence of the poet. With far greater learning, and much more ability, Joseph Milner devoted all the leisure of his life, and all the resources of his mind, to the accomplishment of Newton's design. He pledged himself to demonstrate that, from the days of Peter and of Paul, there had been an unbroken succession of Christian teachers and of Christian societies, among whom the eternal fire of gospel truth had burnt pure and undefiled by the errors which were abjured in the sixteenth century by the half of Christendom.

Milner's qualifications for this enterprise, were a respectable proficiency in classical knowledge; a far wider acquaintance with the Greek and Latin fathers than was usual at that time and in this country; an inflexible regard for truth; an ardent attachment to the memory of those heroes of primitive piety, who were at once the witnesses and the ornaments of his cause; and the command of a style, natural and perspicuous, and glowing with a devout reverence for

whatever indicated the presence in the Church of her Supreme Head, and of her Holy Paraclete. He lived to complete the greater part of his plan, but left his account of the German Reformation to be finished by his brother Isaac, and bequeathed to the most worthy, the privilege of bringing his history to an end. It fell, as we have seen, into the hands of John, the son of Thomas Scott.

The Church History of Joseph Milner is one of those books which may perish with some revolution of the moral and religious character of the English race, but hardly otherwise. For, in a tone and manner eminently English, it contains the only extant attempt to deduce the theological genealogy of the British churches from those of which the Apostles were the immediate founders. Our national homage for antiquity, and for remote traditions, constrains us all, and some of us with undisguised reluctance, to attach a high value to our ecclesiastical ancestry, and to our inheritance, through them, of our religious opinions. 'The Bible, and the Bible only,' may be our rallying cry; but the 'quod semper, quod ubique,' &c. will never lose its hold on English imaginations, or on English hearts.

It appears to be the opinion of the most competent judges, that Milner was unable to establish the theory to which he was pledged. Indeed his own honest admissions are scarcely to be reconciled with that theory. If the Epistle of St. Paul to the Galatians was really understood by Tertullian, Cyprian, Basil, Chrysostom, Jerome, or by either Gregory, as it was understood by Martin Luther, it will follow that our Church historian was either most unfortunate in examining their writings, or most injudicious in reporting what he discovered in them. Whatever

may be the truth, or whatever the antiquity, of the Lutheran doctrine of justification, Milner has not been able to prove that it held, in the theological system of those Fathers of the Church, the all-important work assigned to it by the great Reformer, or by the incomparably greater Apostle.

That this polar star of our faith underwent a protracted and almost a total eclipse, is one of those strange and obstinate facts which the inquiries of Milner ascertained, and which his integrity has virtually acknowledged. The explanation of that phenomenon we suppose to be, that the vital energy of this doctrine has ever consisted rather in the negation of error, than in the affirmation of any positive truth, —that, with the reappearance of the opposite delusion, the Pauline and Lutheran doctrine has ever reasserted its dominion, — and that with the disappearance, or supposed disappearance, of that heresy, the antagonist doctrine has always fallen into comparative disregard.

Thus, the Jewish people assumed that the Deity considered them alone as righteous or justified persons, and that He looked on the rest of the children of men as cursed with an indelible reprobation. In defence of this opinion they urged that Abraham, their great progenitor, had transmitted to them promises, and that Moses, their great legislator, had given to them a law, from the benefits and obligations of which the rest of mankind were excluded. This exclusive privilege was claimed, on the same grounds, by the early Jewish Christians, except that they acknowledged that heathen converts to the Gospel, who should submit to the law of Moses, and conform to the Mosaic ritual, might also find a place among the righteous or 'justified.' To refute this fatal error, St. Paul taught negatively that no man could be

justified by the works of the law, and affirmatively that men could be justified only by the all-sanctifying influence of faith,—that is, by living habitually in that state of mind, in which the remote is converted into the present, and the unseen into the visible.

With the overthrow of the Jewish economy came the disappearance of this Judaical illusion. The apostolic protests against it having accomplished their purpose, ceased to retain their original significance and value. The doctors of the Church dismissed from their writings and their homilies, what they regarded as an obsolete warning against an exploded error. But when errors kindred to that of the Jewish people sprang up in the Christian Church, the protestation of Paul was also revived to negative and to combat them. His reasoning with the Galatians was quoted against the corresponding fallacies of their own times, by Augustine, by the early Paulicians, by the Waldenses, by Grossetête, by Wicliffe, by Huss, and by Luther. For, in the times of each of them, the Deity was again represented by the priesthood, and was again regarded by the laity, as contemplating the whole human family as outcasts from his presence, with the exception of those only who were recipients of sacerdotal chrisms, indulgences, and absolutions, and who were observant of a certain discipline, ritual, and routine of external duties. They, and they only, were, according to this creed, esteemed by their Creator as righteous or 'justified' persons. The lie of Luther's day was but the revival, in another form, of the lie of the day of Paul of Tarsus, and Luther's contradiction to it was the distinct echo of the contradiction with which it had been met by the great Apostle. Among the fathers of the first three centuries, the same echo was raised faintly and indistinctly, and at length died away

altogether, because in those centuries the lie was uttered in tones too low and indistinct to wound the ears of the guardians of the faith, amidst the din of persecutions from without, and of other controversies from within. It is true, indeed, that the father of lies and his children will always labour to propagate the falsehood, that the divine favour is to be won by burthensome rites, and by certain external and visible acts. At every period, the ministers of truth must therefore denounce the fallacy, as Paul and as Luther denounced it. The absence of such denunciations in the theological writings of any age will prove, not that the champions of Truth had deserted her cause, but that the advocates of Error had desisted from asserting her pretensions — not that the doctrine of justification by faith had been abandoned by the holy and the wise, but that the doctrine of justification by works had not been inculcated by the carnal and the foolish.

Although for this reason, as we believe, Milner was unable to discover much to his immediate purpose in the earlier literature of the Church, yet his diligence in turning up that long-neglected soil, was repaid by an abundant harvest. Though he failed to discover any frequent republication of the apostolic doctrine respecting the piacular inefficacy of any outward acts, and respecting the saving efficacy of that spiritual state which is designated by the word Faith, he succeeded in tracing the deep workings of that vital energy in the meditations, in the writings, in the lives, and in the deaths of a long and illustrious lineage in which the martyrs, the confessors, and the fathers of antiquity are connected by an unbroken and indissoluble chain with the reformers and the missionaries of these later ages. He ascertained that

there had been a constant succession of holy men, who, amidst great differences of judgment and still wider diversities of language, had lived and died in the power of the same faith, maintaining the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. He showed that men might live very wisely while they reasoned very absurdly, — that much practical sanctity was consistent with much theoretical error, — that the victims of many strange superstitions might yet have within them the living fountains of eternal life, — and that to a head impervious to a syllogism, might be united a heart penetrated with the love of God and with the love of man. In the Catholic Church he found a place for not a few Roman Catholics. He discerned that faith in Christ had been the ruling principle, and the image of Christ the acquired likeness, of many, whom a sterner or more ignorant judge would have condemned as benighted idolaters or bewildered formalists.

A noble enterprise and an invaluable conclusion! Though Milner has been surpassed by a host of writers in explaining the relations of the Church with the world, and in recording the occurrences which advanced or retarded her progress to worldly domination, and although he is but an infant in the grasp of his great German rivals in the history of religious opinions, and of the influence of the philosophical sects on the Church, and though it is impossible to assign to him any rank at all as a philosophical, luminous, graphic, or animated historian, yet this praise is exclusively his own — he gave the true answer to the taunting inquiry, 'Where was your religion before Luther?' He demonstrated that it dwelt, if not formally, yet substantially, in the souls, and that it was manifested, if not without some dross

of human infirmity, yet with distinctness, in the lives, of a long succession of saints, canonised or uncanonised, reaching backwards from the sixteenth to the first century of the Christian era; each of whom, could he have seen the days of the monk of Wittemberg, would have hailed him as a brother, would have joined in his devotions, would have sympathised with his hopes, and would have acknowledged that the foundation of their and of his faith was the same, notwithstanding the seeming inconsistency of their creeds, and the wide dissimilarity of their respective rituals.

If that posthumous intercourse between the ancient and the modern worthies of the Church Catholic could have been carried onward from Luther himself to his followers in the Anglican Church, the mighty dead would have greeted none of them with more cordiality than Henry Venn, the last of her four great 'Evangelical' fathers. Vast as is the interval, which, in the estimate of the world, must ever separate heroical from other men, yet, to eyes purged and strengthened like those of such imaginary visitors to discern in the human heart those dormant germs of moral grandeur, which, under the genial influence of meet occasion, would have borne luxuriant fruit, he would have appeared as belonging potentially to that order of mankind, among whom the highest and most conspicuous place belonged actually to Martin Luther.

All the paternal ancestors of Henry Venn, from the Reformation to his own birth, in the reign of George II., had been in holy orders, and several of them had been eminent for piety, zeal, or learning. His father, Richard, was remarkable for his successful opposition to the appointment to the see of Gloucester of Dr. Rundle, whose theology was so liberal,

as at length to have dissolved into a creed, to which any man might assent, who did not dissent from theism. The story is told with great effect in Lord Hervey's memoirs, with the addition that Rundle, after having been rejected by the Church of England, was thrust by Walpole on the Church of Ireland, where, of course, no defender of the faith arose to dispute his pretensions to the mitre. Henry, the son of Richard, adopting the hereditary profession of his family, became successively Vicar of Huddersfield, in Yorkshire, and Rector of Yelling, a small village in the county of Huntingdon. Failing health compelled him to abandon the first of these cures, after an incumbency of twelve years, and the second, after twenty years' continuance in it. He died in the year 1797, beneath the roof of his son, John Venn, who having, like himself, observed the law of his house, was then in the possession of the rectory, and residing at the parsonage, of Clapham, in Surrey. Faithful to the example of his progenitors, and therefore sustaining the same clerical office, Henry, the son of John Venn, has recently published a brief memoir of his grandfather, a collection of his letters, and a new edition of his 'Complete Duty of Man,' the book on which his fame as an author and a theologian principally depends. His celebrity as a minister of the Gospel, rests on traditions which are not likely soon to die away; and was not long since resting on the personal recollections of some few aged men and women in Yorkshire, whose hearts and lips overflowed as often as they could find any one to listen to their accounts of the apostolical teacher, by whom they had been guided in youth into those paths of pleasantness, which, even in decrepitude and decay, they still found to be the ways of peace.

Those traditions, and the writings of Henry Venn, are calculated to excite thoughts far more befitting the silence of a solitary evening's walk than the noise and excitement of the press. His venerable image seems to look upbraidingly on any attempt to delineate himself or his works in a spirit less devout than his own, or less exclusively consecrated to the glory of God and to the well-being of mankind. Yet, it can hardly be at variance with those great objects of his life to record of him, that he was one of the most eminent examples of one of the most uncommon of human excellencies — the possession of perfect and uninterrupted mental health. As all the chords of a well-tuned harp, or as all the organs of a well-ordered body, so all the faculties of a well-constituted mind, contribute, each in its due place and measure, to that harmony which is the essence at once of all effective action, and of all salutary repose. In this sense of the words, Henry Venn was 'made whole,' first by Nature, or that divine patrimony with which we enter on our present state of being; and then by Providence, or that divine beneficence which directs and blesses our progress through life. The congruity of his intellectual powers was not marred by any discord in his affections, nor did either reason or passion ever abdicate or usurp in his mind the separate provinces over which they were respectively commissioned to reign. There prevailed throughout the whole man, a certain symphony which enabled him to possess his soul in order, in energy, and in composure. And as, in all great social enterprises, the perfection of the success depends on the completeness of the concert between the various co-operating agents, so in individual life, perfection can result only from the absolute accord, and the mutual sup-

port, of the various springs of action which animate the solitary agent. Those qualities which are antagonistic in most men, were consentient in him; and his talents, though separately of no very exalted order, became, by their habitual concurrence, of very singular efficacy. Thus, his athletic sense was associated with a keen taste for the beautiful, and with a quick perception of the ludicrous. Though dwelling amidst the most sublime devotional elevations, his oral and epistolary discourse on those mysterious topics, was characterised by perfect simplicity and transparent clearness. With a well-stored memory, he was an independent, if not an original, thinker. With deep and even vehement attachments, he knew how to maintain on fit occasions, even towards those whom he loved best, a judicial gravity, and even a judicial sternness. He acted with indefatigable energy in the throng of men, and yet, in solitude, could meditate with unwearied perseverance. He was at once a preacher, at whose voice multitudes wept or trembled, and a companion to whose privacy the wise resorted for instruction, the wretched for comfort, and all for sympathy. In all the exigencies and in all the relations of life, the firmest reliance might always be placed on his counsels, his support, and his example. Like St. Paul, he became all things to all men; and, for the same reason, that he might by any means save some. For the concentration of all his desires on that one object, bore the double relation of cause and of effect to that concentration of thought and oneness of mind by which he was distinguished. Keeping that single end continually in view, he made all the resources within his reach at all times tributary to it.

To Henry Venn, therefore, among the 'Evangelical'

clergy, belonged, as by an inherent right, the province which he occupied of giving to the world a perfect and continuous view of their system of Christian ethics. The sacred consonance of all the passages of his own life, and the uniform convergence of them all towards one great design, rendered his conceptions of duty eminently pure, large, and consistent; gave singular acuteness to his discernment of moral error; and imparted a rich and cordial unction to his persuasions to obedience.

The Anglican Church already possessed, in the 'Whole Duty of Man,' a treatise on what Bentham calls 'deontology,' remarkable for the idiomatic force of its style, for the extent of its popularity, and for the darkness which envelopes its true authorship. But to Mr. Venn, and to his brethren, it appeared so defective, in the pursuit of morality downwards to its deep and only sure foundation, that he thought it necessary, not only to lay the basis anew, but also to erect again the superstructure, with all the variations and additions consequent on that fundamental change. The '*Complete* Duty of Man' has ever since rivalled, if it has not surpassed, the fame and the acceptance of the '*Whole* Duty of Man,' and is still one of those few books of which the benefits are never unfelt, of which the love never abates, and of which the republication is never long intermitted. Even in our own age of literary voluptuousness, it retains the undiminished favour of many classes of readers, although no sacrifice is made in it to gratify the taste of any class. It was written from the soul, and therefore to the soul; from a full heart, and therefore with genuine tenderness; from a profound sense of responsibility, and therefore with the deepest seriousness; from a full mind, and therefore with no perceptible regard

to mere words; from the most mature experience, and therefore in a tone which never falters, and in a style perfectly artless, unrestrained, and perspicuous. He might have borrowed for this and for all his writings, from his friend, John Newton, the title of Cardiphonia.

They have passed to their account, these holy men of the eighteenth century; and it is neither without the appearance, nor the consciousness, of presumption, that these attempts are made to discriminate between them, and to assign to each his appropriate claims to the gratitude of a later age. All such judgments must be more or less conjectural, resting on those slight and imperfect indications of character, which can be discovered in their extant writings, or in the brief notices in which their contemporaries have celebrated them. But after every allowance shall have been made for these sources of error, enough will remain to convince any impartial inquirer, that the first generation of the clergy designated as 'Evangelical,' were the second founders of the Church of England— that if not entitled to the praise of genius, of eloquence, or of profound learning, they were devout, sincere, and genuine men — that the doctrines of the New Testament were to them a reality, and the English liturgy a truth — that their public ministrations and their real meaning were in exact coincidence—that they rose as much above the *Hoadleian* formality as above the *Marian* superstition — that they revived amongst us the spirit of Paul and Peter, of Augustine and Boniface, of Wicliffe and Ridley, of Baxter and Howe — that they burned with a loyal and enlightened zeal for the kingdom of Christ, and for those eternal verities on which that kingdom is founded — that their personal sanctity

rose to the same elevation as their theological opinions — and that in all these respects they formed a contrast, as cheering in one light as it was melancholy in another, to the spirit which, in that age, characterised their clerical brethren. On the other hand, the coincidence with the spirit and the doctrines of the Methodists, and especially of Whitfield, was such as to forbid the belief that there existed no other relations between the two bodies, but that of a simultaneous existence. It has already, indeed, been shown, that Newton was the disciple of Whitfield, that Scott was the disciple of Newton, and that Milner was his imitator; and it would be easy to show that Venn lived in a long and friendly intercourse with the great Itinerant, and officiated with him in places of public worship which rejected episcopal controul.

But the 'Evangelical Fathers,' bound as they were to the Church of England by their vows, and deeply attached to her ordinances, had neither the power nor the wish to emulate the 'Fathers of Methodism,' by establishing a new ecclesiastical polity. The line of demarcation between them and the other Anglican clergy, being therefore indicated by no corresponding difference of government, of confessions, or of ritual, gradually became less and less definite, until at length it had been almost wholly obliterated. No one man of commanding genius arose to lay the foundation of a new spiritual dynasty; and no religious system can ever acquire a corporate perpetuity, or long retain a continuous succession, which does not commence in some such personal unity. No scholars arose among them illustrious for learning, nor any authors to whom the homage of the world at large has been rendered; and without such an aristocracy, no intellectual commonwealth can long flourish. Their

theology, also, revolved so much on a very few central points, as to induce a disastrous facility in catching a superficial acquaintance with it, and in reproducing it in a plausible imitation. Popular applause, neither carefully measured, nor always well merited, rewarded any eminent success in the advocacy of their peculiar tenets; and they were early taught the deep truth of the remark of Tacitus — 'Pessimum inimicorum genus, laudantes.'

Gradually, also, it came to pass in the Evangelical, as in other societies, that the symbol was adopted by many who were strangers to the spirit of the original institution; — by many an indolent, trivial, or luxurious aspirant to its advantages, both temporal and eternal. The terms of membership had never been definite or severe. Whitfield and his followers had required from those who joined their standard neither the practice of any peculiar austerities, nor the adoption of any new ritual, nor the abandonment of any established ceremonies, nor an irksome submission to ecclesiastical authority, nor the renunciation of any reputable path to eminence or to wealth. The distinguishing tenets were few and easily learned; the necessary observances neither onerous nor unattended with much pleasurable emotion. In the lapse of years the discipline of the society imperceptibly declined, and errors coeval with its existence exhibited themselves in an exaggerated form. When country gentlemen and merchants, lords spiritual and temporal, and even fashionable ladies gave in their adhesion; their dignities uninvaded, their ample expenditure flowing chiefly in its accustomed channels, and their saloons as crowded, if not as brilliant, as before, the spirit of Whitfield was to be traced among his followers, not so much in the burning zeal and self-

devotion of that extraordinary man, as in his insubordination to episcopal rule, and in his unquenchable thirst for spiritual excitement. Although the fields and the market-places no longer echoed to the voice of the impassioned preacher and the hallelujahs of enraptured myriads, yet spacious theatres, sacred to such uses, received a countless host to harangue or to applaud, to recount or to hear adventures of stirring interest, to listen to exhortations for propagating the Christian faith to the furthest recesses of the globe, to drop the superfluous guinea, and to retire with feelings strangely balanced between the human and the divine, the glories of heaven and the vanities of earth.

And then, in obedience to the general law of human affairs, arrived the day of reaction. A new race of students had grown up at Oxford. They were men of unsullied, and even severe virtue; animated by a devotion which, if not very fervent, was at least genuine and grave; conversant with classical literature, and not without pretensions, more or less considerable, to an acquaintance with Christian antiquity. As they paced thoughtfully along those tall avenues, to which, a hundred years before, Whitfield and the Wesleys had been accustomed to retire for meditation, they recoiled, with a mixture of aversion and contempt, from the image of the crowded assemblages, and the dramatic exercises, in which the successors of those great men in the Church of England were performing so conspicuous a part. They revolved, not without indignation, the intellectual barrenness with which that Church had been stricken, from the time when her most popular teachers had not merely been satisfied to tread the narrow circle of the 'Evangelical' theology, but had exulted in

that bondage as indicating their possession of a purer light than had visited the other ministers of the Gospel. They invoked, with an occasional sigh, but not without many a bitter smile, the reappearance amongst us of a piety more profound and masculine, more meek and contemplative. They believed that such a change in the religious character of their age and country was a divine command, and that a commission had been given to themselves to carry it into effect.

It happened that at this period, Mr. Wordsworth had, at Oxford, a pupil and an imitator, who would have surpassed his master, if he could have attained to the exquisite felicities of his master's occasional and better style. The author of the 'Christian Year,' like the author of the 'Excursion,' inhabited a world in which the humblest objects, and the most familiar incidents, were symbolical of whatever is most elevated in things spiritual, and most remote from our experience in things invisible. In the tame suburbs, the dusty roads, and the busy streets of Oxford, Mr. Keble lived by imagination, not by sight. On every side they teemed for him with analogies and interpretations of the significance of her liturgical offices, of the mysteries of her priesthood, and of the temples erected by no human hands in the souls of her worshippers. When he transferred to the canvass the rich hues in which the sanctuary within the veil of common things was disclosed to his own eyes, he was accustomed to throw over the picture an atmosphere, which, however brilliant, was not seldom so hazy as to be almost impervious. What the Virgin Mother had been to the great painters of Italy, that the Anglican or Elizabethan Church became to him. Immaculate in conception, peerless in beauty, resplen-

dent with every grace, she presented herself to him as a living personality to be loved and wooed, and as a divine impersonation to be adored and hymned.

No strains could be more grateful than these to the sensitive ears which had been wounded by the coarser sounds wafted from Exeter Hall to the banks of Isis, and it is one of the caprices of fortune, which, at the expense of the Professor of Poetry, has conferred on the Professor of Hebrew the honour of bestowing his patronymic on the league formed under the auspices of their common Alma Mater, against the 'Evangelical succession.' For, although the warfare of their holy alliance has chiefly been conducted in the lowlands of Prose, it commenced by an irruption of the invaders from the mountain tops of Poetry. From first to last, indeed, their assaults have been more or less Parnassian or Pegasæan. The same hands which wrought at the 'Tracts for the Times,' strung and swept the chords of the 'Lyra Apostolica.' In everything but rhythm, the tractarian essay was lyrical. In everything but tediousness, the apostolic lyre was tractarian. To each belonged the poetical privilege of escaping by a half sense, or by the half suggestion of a sense, or by words with no sense at all, from the dilemma of Mr. Justice Shallow — 'If, sir, you come with news from the court, I take it, sir, there is but two ways, either to utter them, or to conceal them.'

Mr. Newman was incomparably the most eminent of those tractarians, who chiefly used the instrument of prose. His theology differed from that of Mr. Keble, as a substance in a solidified form differs from itself when in a gaseous form. The style of each bore the impress of learning, and elevation of sanctity and tenderness, but was chargeable with that cloudi-

ness or ambi-dexterity of meaning which David Hume denounced as the vilest of all the abuses of the gift of language. But these eminent writers were still more clearly identified by their unmasculine horror of every thing vulgar in belief or in sentiment, and therefore of the 'Evangelical' tenets as vulgar beyond all other opinions, and of the 'Evangelical' teachers as vulgar beyond all other men. And as from Oxford had come forth Wicliffe, to subvert the spiritual power of Rome, and Whitfield, with a deluge of popular rhetoric, to overwhelm the hierarchy of England, so in the same venerable academy arose Messrs. Keble and Newman, to cast down the stronghold of Protestantism. But they came neither with conflagration nor with storm. The genius of refinement, fastidiousness, exclusion, and delicacy, attended, if it did not guide, their movements. They were therefore speedily encumbered by the throng who will always attach themselves to any leader who exhibits a supercilious contempt for the common herd, and stands haughtily aloof from it. But they were also followed by the crowd of aspirants after sacerdotal domination, and by that still larger crowd, who, not knowing how to distinguish between the right and the duty of private judgment, are rejoiced to repudiate both the one and the other, as burdens beyond their strength.

It therefore came to pass, in the Oxonian, as in other leagues, that the head moved forward by the impulse of the tail. Step by step in their progress, 'the Church,' whom they worshipped, changed her attitude and her aspect. She soon disclaimed her Elizabethan or statutory origin, and then made vehement efforts to escape from her Elizabethan or statutory ceremonial. She assumed the title, and

laid claim to the character, of the Primitive Church, or the Church of the Fathers, and at length arrogated to herself the prerogatives of that catholic or universal church; which 'lifts her mitred front in courts and palaces,' whether at Rome, at Moscow, or at Lambeth, but whose presence is never vouchsafed to any who cannot trace back from apostolic hands an episcopal succession.

At this stage of the history of the Oxonian league, its progress was quickened and animated by the panic which exhibited itself from one end to the other of the hostile camp. The disciples of Whitfield and of Wesley united to those of Newton and Scott, of Milner and of Venn, and, reinforced by the whole strength of the Nonconformists, began to throw up along the whole field of controversy entrenchments for their own defence, and batteries for the annoyance of their assailants. Amongst the literary missiles cast by the contending hosts against each other, there are few better worth the study of those who wish to estimate the probable result of the conflict, than the life of Richard Hurrell Froude. It was launched from a catapult under the immediate direction of Messrs. Keble and Newman themselves, and, though it is a book of no great inherent value, it has a considerable interest as the only biography which the world possesses, of a confessor of Oxford Catholicism. It contains a vivid picture of the discipline, the studies, the opinions, and the mental habits of his fraternity, and is published by the two great fathers of that school, with the avowal of their 'own general coincidence' in the opinions and feelings of their disciple. We have thus a delineation at full length of one of those divines who are to effect the conquest which was attempted in vain by the Bellarmines and the Bossuets of former

times. If it teaches us nothing else, this biography will at least teach us what is the real extent and urgency of the danger which has so much disturbed the tranquillity of the guardians of the Protestant faith of England.

Richard Hurrell Froude was born, as we read, on the 'Feast of the Annunciation,' in the year 1803, and died in 1836. He was an Etonian, a fellow of Oriel College, a priest in holy orders of the Church of England, the writer of unsuccessful prize essays, and of journals, letters, and sermons; an occasional contributor to the periodical literature of his theological associates; and, during the last four years of his life, an invalid in search of health, either in the South of Europe or in the West Indies.

Such are all the incidents of a life to the commemoration of which two octavo volumes have been dedicated. A more intractable story, if regarded merely as a narrative, was never undertaken. But Mr. Froude left behind him a great collection of papers, which affection would have committed to the fire, though party spirit has given them to the press. The most unscrupulous publisher of diaries and private correspondence never offered for sale a self-analysis more frank or less prepossessing. But the world is invited to gaze on this suicidal portraiture on account of 'the extreme importance of the views, to the development of which the whole is meant to be subservient,' and in order that they may not lose 'the instruction deriveable from a full exhibition of his character as a witness to those views.' Heavy as are the penalties which the editors of these volumes have incurred for their disclosure of the infirmities of their friend, the world will probably absolve them, if they will publish more of the letters which he ap-

pears to have received from his mother, and to have transmitted to them. One such letter which they have rescued from oblivion is worth far more than all which they have published of her son's. Though both the parent and the child have long since been withdrawn from the reach of this world's judgment, it yet seems almost an impiety to transcribe her estimate of his early character, and to add that the less favourable anticipations which she drew from her study of him in youth, were but too distinctly verified in his riper years. She read his heart with a mother's sagacity, and thus revealed it to himself with a mother's tenderness and truth.

'From his very birth his temper has been peculiar; pleasing, intelligent, and attaching, when his mind was undisturbed, and he was in the company of people who treated him reasonably and kindly; but exceedingly impatient under vexatious circumstances; very much disposed to find his own amusement in teazing and vexing others; and almost entirely incorrigible when it was necessary to reprove him. I never could find a successful mode of treating him. Harshness made him obstinate and gloomy: calm and long displeasure made him stupid and sullen; and kind patience had not sufficient power over his feelings to force him to govern himself. After a statement of such great faults, it may seem an inconsistency to say, that he nevertheless still bore about him strong marks of a promising character. In all points of substantial principle his feelings were just and high. He had (for his age) an unusually deep feeling of admiration for every thing which was good and noble; his relish was lively, and his taste good, for all the pleasures of the imagination; and he was

also quite conscious of his own faults, and (untempted) had a just dislike to them.'

Exercising a stern and absolute dominion over all the baser passions, with a keen perception of the beautiful in nature and in art, and a deep homage for the sublime in morals; imbued with the spirit of the classical authors, and delighting in the exercise of talents which, though they fell far short of excellence, rose as far above mediocrity, Mr. Froude might have seemed to want no promise of an honourable rank in literature, or of distinction in his sacred office. His career was intercepted by a premature death; but enough is recorded to show that his aspirations, however noble, must have been defeated by the pride and moroseness which his mother's wisdom detected, and which her love disclosed to him; united as they were to a constitutional distrust of his own powers, and a weak reliance on other minds for guidance and support. A spirit at once haughty and unsustained by genuine self-confidence; subdued by the stronger will or intellect of other men, and glorying in that subjection; regarding the opponents of his masters with an intolerance exceeding their own; and, in the midst of all his animosity towards others, turning with no infrequent indignation on itself,—might form the basis of a good dramatic sketch, of which Mr. Froude might not unworthily sustain the burden. But a 'dialogue of the dead,' in which George Whitfield and Richard Froude should be the interlocutors, would be a more appropriate channel for illustrating the practical uses of 'the Second Reformation,' and of the 'Catholic Restoration,' which it is the object of their respective biographies to illustrate. Rhadamanthus having dismissed them from his tribunal, they would com-

pare together their juvenile admiration of the drama, their ascetic discipline at Oxford, their early dependence on stronger or more resolute minds, their propensity to self-observation and to self-portraiture, their contemptuous opinions of the negro race, and the surprise with which they witnessed the worship of the Church of Rome in lands where it is still triumphant. So far all is peace, and the *concordes animæ* exchange such greetings as pass between disembodied spirits. But when the tidings brought by the new denizen of the Elysian fields to the reformer of the eighteenth century, reach his affrighted shade, the regions of the blessed are disturbed by an unwonted discord; and the fiery soul of Whitfield blazes with intense desire to resume his wanderings through the earth, and to lift up his voice against the new apostasy.

It was with no unmanly dread of the probe, but from want of skill or leisure to employ it, that the self-scrutiny of Whitfield seldom or never penetrated much below the surface. Preach he must; and when no audience could be brought together, he seized a pen and preached to himself. The uppermost feeling, be it what it may, is put down in his journal honestly, vigorously, and devoutly. Satan is menaced and upbraided. Intimations from heaven are recorded without one painful doubt of their origin. He prays, and exults, anticipates the future with delight, looks back to the past with thankfulness, blames himself simply because he thinks himself to blame, despairs of nothing, fears nothing, and has not a moment's ill-will to any human being.

Mr. Froude conducts his written soliloquies in a different spirit. His introverted gaze analyses with elaborate minuteness the various motives at the con-

fluence of which his active powers receive their impulse, and, with perverted sagacity, pursues the self-examination, until, bewildered in the dark labyrinth of his own nature, he escapes to the cheerful light of day by locking up his journal. 'A friend' (whose real name is as distinctly intimated under its initial letter, as if it were written at length) 'advises burning confessions. I cannot make up my mind to that,' observes the penitent, 'but I think I can see many points in which it will be likely to do me good to be cut off for some time from these records.' On such a subject the author of 'The Christian Year' was entitled to greater deference. That bright ornament of the College *de Propagandâ* at Oxford had also gazed on his own heart through the mental microscope, till he had learnt the danger of the excessive use of it. While admonishing men to approach their Creator not as isolated beings, but as members of the Universal Church, and while aiding the inmates of her hallowed courts to worship in strains so pure, so reverent, and so meek, as to answer not unworthily to the voice of hope and reconciliation in which she is addressed by her Divine Head, this 'sweet singer' had so brooded over the evanescent processes of his own spiritual nature, as not seldom to render his real meaning imperceptible to his readers, and probably to himself. With how sound a judgment he counselled Mr. Froude to burn his books, may be judged from the following entries in them:—

'I have been talking a great deal to B. about religion to-day. He seems to take such straightforward practical views of it that, when I am talking to him, I wonder what I have been bothering myself with all the summer, and almost doubt how far it is right to allow myself to indulge in speculations on a subject

where all that is necessary is so plain and obvious.'— ' Yesterday, when I went out shooting, I fancied I did not care whether I hit or not, but when it came to the point I found myself anxious, and, after having killed, was not unwilling to let myself be considered a better shot than I described myself. I had an impulse, too, to let it be thought that I had only three shots when I really had had four. It was slight, to be sure, but I felt it.' — ' I have read my journal, though I can hardly identify myself with the person it describes. It seems like having some one under one's guardianship who was an intolerable fool, and exposed himself to my contempt every moment for the most ridiculous and trifling motives; and while I was thinking all this, I went into L.'s room to seek a pair of shoes, and on hearing him coming got away as silently as possible. Why did I do this? Did I think I was doing what L. did not like, or was it the relic of a sneaking habit? I will ask myself these questions again.' — ' I have a sort of vanity which aims at my own good opinion, and I look for any thing to prove to myself that I am more anxious to mind myself than other people. I was very hungry, but because I thought the charge unreasonable, I tried to shirk the waiter; sneaking!' — ' Yesterday I was much put out by an old fellow chewing tobacco and spitting across me; also bad thoughts of various kinds kept presenting themselves to my mind when it was vacant.'—'I talked sillily to-day as I used to do last term, but took no pleasure in it, so I am not ashamed. Although I don't recollect any harm of myself, yet I don't feel that I have made a clean breast of it.' — ' I forgot to mention that I had been looking round my rooms, and thinking that they looked comfortable and nice, and that I said in my heart, Ah, ah! I am warm.'

—' It always suggests itself to me that a wise thought is wasted when it is kept to myself, against which, as it is my most bothering temptation, I will set down some arguments to be called to mind in time of trouble.' — ' Now I am proud of this, and think that the knowledge it shows of myself implies a greatness of mind.' — ' These records are no guide to me to show the state of my mind afterwards; they are so far from being exercises of humility, that they lessen the shame of what I record just as professions and good-will to other people reconcile us to our neglect of them.'

The precept 'know thyself' came down from heaven; but such self-knowledge as this has no heavenward tendency. It is no part of the economy of our nature, nor is it the design of our Maker, that we should so cunningly unravel the subtle filaments of which our motives are composed. If a man should subject to such a scrutiny the feelings of others to himself, he would soon lose his faith in human virtue and affection. The mind which should thus put to the question its own workings in the domestic or social relations of life, would ere long become the victim of a still more fatal scepticism. Why dream that this reflex operation, which, if directed towards those feelings of which our fellow-creatures are the object, would infallibly eject from the heart all love and all respect for man, should strengthen either the love or the fear of God? A well-tutored conscience aims at breadth rather than minuteness of survey; and tasks itself much more to ascertain general results than to find out the solution of riddles. So long as religious men must reveal their ' experiences,' and self-defamation revels in its present impunity, there is no help for it, but in withholding the applause to which even

lowliness itself aspires for the candour with which it is combined, and the acuteness by which it is embellished.

As it is not by these nice self-observers that the creeds of hoar antiquity, and the habits of centuries are to be shaken; so neither is such high emprise reserved for ascetics who can pause to enumerate the slices of bread and butter from which they have abstained. When Whitfield would mortify his body, he set about it like a man.' The paroxysm was short, indeed, but terrible. While it lasted his diseased imagination brought soul and body into deadly conflict, the fierce spirit spurning, trampling, and well-nigh destroying the peccant carcass. Not so the fastidious and refined 'witness to the views' of the restorers of the Catholic Church. The strife between his spiritual and animal nature is recorded in his journal in such terms as these, — 'Looked with greediness to see if there was goose on the table for dinner.' — 'Meant to have kept a fast, and did abstain from dinner, but at tea eat buttered toast.' — 'Tasted nothing to-day till tea time, and then only one cup and dry bread.' — 'I have kept my fast strictly, having taken nothing till near nine this evening, and then only a cup of tea and a little bread without butter, but it has not been as easy as it was last.' — 'I made rather a more hearty tea than usual, quite giving up the notion of a fast in W.'s rooms, and by this weakness have occasioned another slip.'

Whatever may be thought of the propriety of disclosing such passages as these, they will provoke a contemptuous smile from no one who knows much of his own heart. But they may relieve the anxiety of the alarmists. Luther and Zuingle, Cranmer and Latimer, may still rest in their honoured graves.

'Take courage, brother Ridley, we shall light up such a flame in England as shall not soon be put out,' is a prophecy which will not be defeated by the successors of the Oxonian divines who listened to it, so long as they shall be vacant to record, and to publish, contrite reminiscences of a desire for roasted goose, and of an undue indulgence in buttered toast.

Yet the will to subvert the doctrines and discipline of the Reformation is not wanting, and is not concealed. Mr. Froude himself, were he still living, might, indeed, object to be judged by his careless and familiar letters. No such objection can, however, be made by the eminent persons who have deliberately given them to the world on account 'of the truth and extreme importance of the views to which the whole is meant to be subservient,' and in which they record their 'own general concurrence.' Of these weighty truths take the following examples:—

'You will be shocked at my avowal that I am every day becoming a less and less loyal son of the Reformation. It appears to me plain that in all matters which seem to us indifferent or even doubtful, we should conform our practices to those of the Church, which has preserved its traditionary practices unbroken. We cannot know about any seemingly indifferent practice of the Church of Rome that it is not a development of the apostolic τύπος, and it is to no purpose to say that we can find no proof of it in the writings of the first six centuries—they must find a disproof if they would do any thing.'—'I think people are injudicious who talk against the Roman Catholics for worshipping saints and honouring the Virgin and images, &c. These things may perhaps be idolatrous; I cannot make up my mind about it.'—'P. called us the Papal Protestant Church, in

which he proved a double ignorance, as we are Catholics without the Popery, and Church of England men without the Protestantism.' — 'The more I think over that view of yours about regarding our present communion service, &c. as a judgment on the Church, and taking it as the crumbs from the apostle's table, the more I am struck with its fitness to be dwelt upon as tending to check the intrusion of irreverent thoughts, without in any way interfering with one's just indignation.' — 'Your trumpery principle about Scripture being the sole rule of faith in fundamentals (I nauseate the word), is but a mutilated edition, without the breadth and axiomatic character, of the original.'— 'Really I hate the Reformation and the Reformers more and more, and have almost made up my mind that the rationalist spirit they set afloat is the ψευδοπροφήτης of the Revelations.'—'Why do you praise Ridley? Do you know sufficient good about him to counterbalance the fact, that he was the associate of Cranmer, Peter Martyr, and Bucer?' — 'I wish you could get to know something of S. and W.' (Southey and Wordsworth), 'and un-Protestantise, un-Miltonise them.' — '*How is it* WE *are so much in advance of our generation?*'

Spirit of George Whitfield! how would thy voice, rolled from 'the secret place of thunders,' have overwhelmed these puny protests against the truths which it was the one business of thy life to proclaim from the rising to the setting sun! In what does the modern creed of Oxford differ from the ancient faith of Rome? Hurried along by the abhorred current of advancing knowledge and social improvement, they have indeed renounced papal dominion, and denied papal infallibility, and rejected the grosser superstitions which Rome herself at once despises and

promotes. But a prostrate submission to human authority — the repose of the wearied or indolent mind on external observances — an escape from the arduous exercise of man's highest faculties in the worship of his Maker — and the usurped dominion of the imaginative over the rational nature, — these are the common characteristics of both systems.

The Reformation restored to the Christian world its only authentic canon, and its one Supreme Head. It proclaimed the Scriptures as the rule of life; and the Divine Redeemer as the supreme and central object to whom every eye must turn, and on whom every hope must rest. It cast down not only the idols erected for the adoration of the vulgar, but the idolatrous abstractions to which the worship of more cultivated minds was rendered. Penetrating the design, and seizing the spirit of the gospels, the reformers inculcated the faith in which the sentient and the spiritual in man's compound nature had each its appropriate office; the one directed to the Redeemer in his palpable form, the other to the Divine Paraclete in his hidden agency; while, united with these, they exhibited to a sinful, but penitent, race the parental character of the Omnipresent Deity. Such is not the teaching of the restored theology. The most eminent of its professors have thrown open the doors of Mr. Froude's oratory, and have invited all passers-by to notice in his prayers and meditations 'the absence of any distinct mention of our Lord and Saviour.' They are exhorted not to doubt that there was a real though silent 'allusion to Christ' under the titles in which the Supreme Being is addressed; and are told that 'this circumstance may be a comfort to those who cannot bring themselves to assume the tone of many popular writers of this day, who yet are dis-

couraged by the peremptoriness with which it is exacted of them. The truth is, that a mind alive to its own real state often shrinks to utter what it most dwells upon; and is too full of awe and fear to do more than silently hope what it most wishes.'

It would indeed be presumptuous to pass a censure, or to hazard an opinion, on the private devotions of any man; but there is no such risk in rejecting the apology which the publishers of those secret exercises have advanced for Mr. Froude's departure from the habits of his fellow Christians. Feeble, indeed, and emasculate must be the system, which, in its delicate distaste for the 'popular writers of the day,' would bury in silence the name in which every tongue and language has been summoned to worship and to rejoice. Well may 'awe and fear' become all who assume and all who invoke it. But an 'awe' which 'shrinks to utter' the name of Him who was born at Bethlehem, and yet does not fear to use the name which is ineffable; — a 'fear' which can make mention of the Father, but may not speak of the Brother, of all, — is a feeling which fairly baffles comprehension. There is a much more simple, though a less imposing theory. Mr. Froude permitted himself, and was encouraged by his correspondents, to indulge in the language of antipathy and scorn towards a large body of his fellow Christians. It tinges his letters, his journals, and is not without its influence even on his devotions. Those despised men too often celebrated the events of their Redeemer's life, and the benefits of his passion, in language of offensive familiarity, and invoked Him with fond and feeble epithets. Therefore, a good Oxford-Catholic must envelope in mystic terms all allusion to Him round whom as its centre the whole Christian system revolves. The line

of demarcation between themselves and these coarse sentimentalists must be broad and deep, even though it should exclude those by whom it is drawn, from all the peculiar and distinctive ground on which the standard of the reformed churches has been erected. There is really nothing to dread from such hostility and from such enemies. A fine lady visits the United States, and, in loathing against the salivated and tobacconised republic, becomes an Absolutist. A 'double-first class' theologian overhears the Evangelical psalmody, and straightway turns Catholic. But Congress will not dissolve at the bidding of the fair Exclusive; nor will Exeter Hall be closed to propitiate the fastidious Double-first. The martyrs of disgust and the heroes of revolutions are composed of entirely opposite materials, and are cast in quite different moulds. Nothing truly great or formidable was ever yet accomplished, in thought or action, by men whose love for truth was not strong enough to triumph over their dislike of the offensive objects with which truth may chance to be associated.

Mr. Froude was the helpless victim of such associations. Nothing escapes his abhorrence which has been regarded with favour by his political or religious antagonists. The bill for the Abolition of Slavery was recommended to Parliament by an Administration more than suspected of Liberalism in matters ecclesiastical. The 'Witness to Catholic Views,' 'in whose sentiments as a whole,' his editors concur, visits the West Indies, and they are not afraid to publish the following report of his feelings:—'I have felt it a kind of duty to maintain in my mind an habitual hostility to the niggers, and to chuckle over the failures of the new system, as if these poor wretches concentrated in themselves all the Whiggery,

dissent, cant, and abomination that have been ranged on their side.' Lest this should pass for a pleasant extravagance, the editors enjoin the reader not to '' confound the author's view of the negro cause and of the *abstract negro* with his feelings towards any he should actually meet;' and Professor Thöluck is summoned from Germany to explain how the 'originators of error' may lawfully be the objects of a good man's hate, and how it may innocently overflow upon all their clients, kindred, and connexions. Mr. Froude's feelings towards the 'abstract negro' would have satisfied the learned Professor in his most malevolent mood. 'I am ashamed,' he says, 'I cannot get over my prejudices against the niggers.'—'Every one I meet seems to me like an incarnation of the whole Anti-Slavery Society, and Fowell Buxton at their head.'—'The thing that strikes me as most remarkable in the cut of these niggers is excessive immodesty, a forward stupid familiarity intended for civility, which prejudices me against them worse even than Buxton's cant did. It is getting to be the fashion with every body, even the planters, to praise the emancipation and Mr. Stanley.'

Mr. Froude, or rather his editors, appear to have fallen into the error of supposing that their profession gives them not merely the right to admonish, but the privilege to scold. Lord Stanley and Mr. Buxton have, however, the consolation of being railed at in good company. Hampden is 'hated' with much zeal, though, it is admitted, with imperfect knowledge. Louis Philippe, and his associates of the Three Days, receive the following humane benediction—'I sincerely hope the march of mind in France *may yet prove a bloody one.*' 'The election of the wretched B. for ——, and that base fellow H. for

——, in spite of the exposure,' &c. Again, the editors protest against our supposing that this is a playful exercise in the art of exaggeration. 'It should be observed,' they say, 'as in other parts of this volume, that the author used these words on principle, not as abuse, but as expressing matters of fact, as a way of bringing before his own mind things as they are.'

Milton, however, is the especial object of Mr. Froude's virtuous abhorrence. He is 'a detestable author.' Mr. Froude rejoices to learn something of the Puritans, because, as he says, 'It gives me a better right to hate Milton, and accounts for many of the things which most disgusted me in his (*not in my sense of the word*) *poetry!*'—'A lady told me yesterday that you wrote the article of Sacred Poetry, &c. I thought it did not come up to what I thought your standard of aversion to Milton.'

Mr. Froude and his editors must absolutely be delivered over to the secular arm and club of Dr. Philip, under the writ *De Hæretico Castigando*, for their wilful obstinacy in rejecting the infallible sentence of the fathers and ecumenical counsels of the church poetical on this article of faith. There is no room for mercy. Messrs. Froude and Newman are not of the audience, meet but few, to whom the Immortal addressed himself. They have no place in that little company to which alone it is reserved to estimate the powers of such a mind, and reverently to notice its defects. They belong to that multitude who have to make their choice between repeating the established poetical creed, and holding their peace. Why are freethinkers in literature to be endured more than in religion? The guilt of Liberalism has clearly been contracted by this rash judgment; and Professor

Thöluck being the witness, it exposes the criminals and the whole society of Oriel, nay, the entire University itself, to the '*diffusive indignation*' of all who cling to the Catholic faith in poetry.

There are much better things in Mr. Froude's book than the preceding quotations might appear to promise. If given as specimens of his powers, they would do injustice to one whom we willingly would believe to have been a good and able man, a ripe scholar, and a devout Christian; though as illustrations of the temper and opinions of those who now sit in Wicliffe's seat, they are neither unfair nor unimportant. But they may convince all whom it concerns, that hitherto at least Oxford has not given birth to a new race of giants, by whom the Evangelical founders and missionaries of the Church of England are about to be expelled from their ancient authority, or the Protestant world excluded from the light of day and the free breath of heaven.

It was but a heartless folly of the surviving friends of Richard Hurrell Froude, which thus exhibited him as the foremost in the reaction against the 'Evangelical' system. To mark the progress of that reaction, his brother (who announces himself as J. A. Froude, of Exeter College, Oxford) has published a novel called the 'Nemesis of Faith.' The passage from the flippant shallowness of the posthumous essayist, to the puny scepticism of the living novelist, has consumed about ten years, although, from first to last, the direction of it has been unaltered. Mr. Richard Hurrell Froude had, however, the merit of using his mother tongue with propriety and ease. It is the taste of Mr. J. A. Froude to involve his meaning in a style which strives in vain to be Germanic, and to adorn it with those meretricious embellishments which he has successfully borrowed from the modern

Parisian romance. This tractarian of the 'latest development' is the biographer of an imaginary pupil of Mr. Newman, on whom he bestows the name of 'Markham Sutherland.' Markham writes several letters to a friend who is made known to us by the name of 'Arthur,' and Arthur attaches to his friend's letters a series of commentaries. But Markham and Arthur are but two names for one person. They have every sentiment, and every opinion in common; if, indeed, their unmanly pulings deserve the name of sentiment, or their chloroform dreams can aspire to the dignity of opinions.

The mouldering walls of an old abbey deliver a discourse to Markham about 'Paganism,' 'Star Gods,' and 'Almighty Pan.' After secretly avowing to his friend his infidelity, he obtains ordination and a benefice. Certain 'Evangelical' and much abused ladies and gentlemen at a tea-table, wring from him the avowal of his unbelief. He loses his benefice, and migrates to the Lake of Como; where he plays extensively on the flute, writes several irreligious papers, seduces a young married lady, and ends his days in a monastery. Rousseau himself would have shrunk from making his Savoyard vicar the hero of his Eloise. Mr. Froude, without any such embarrassment, prepares his readers for an adulterous catastrophe, by a series of audacious speculations from a clergyman on matters religious and ecclesiastical.

To quote almost any page of this book, would be to stain our own pages, although it would be easy to enliven them by various exhibitions of the writer's estimate of himself and of other men. For example, Mr. Froude's hero having, for the first time, performed divine service as a minister of the Church of England, relieves himself by the following missive to his cor-

respondent: — 'I felt so sick, Arthur. So; I may live to be like Burnet, or Tillotson, or Bishop Newton, or Archdeacon Paley. *May I die sooner!*' There would seem a very reasonable probability that this ardent aspiration will not have been breathed by Mr. J. A. Froude in vain. But the ludicrous too rapidly makes way for emotions of a far different kind. The following are no unfair specimens of the general style of this child and pupil of Oxford Catholicism: —

'Considering all the heresies, the enormous crimes, the wickednesses, the astounding follies which the Bible has been made to justify, and which its indiscriminate reading has suggested; considering that it has been indeed the sword which our Lord said that he was sending; that *not the Devil himself could have invented an implement more potent to fill the hated world with lies, and blood, and fury;* I think certainly that to send hawkers over the world, loaded with copies of this book, scattering it in all places, among all persons — not teaching them to understand it — not standing, like Moses, between that heavenly light and them, but cramming it into their own hands as God's book, which He wrote, and they are to read, each for himself, and learn what they can for themselves — *is the most culpable folly of which it is possible for man to be guilty.*'

'In Christianity, as in every thing else *which men have thrown out* of themselves, there is the strangest mixture of what is most noble with what is most . . . . I shrink from the only word.'

'Sin, therefore, as commonly understood, is a chimera.'

'Our failures are errors, not crimes; — Nature's discipline with which God teaches us, and as little

violations of His law, or rendering us guilty in His eyes, as the artist's early blunders, or even ultimate and entire failures, are laying store of guilt on him.'

'When, when shall we learn that "minds" are governed by laws as inexorable as physical laws, and that a man can as easily refuse to obey what has power over him, as a steel atom can resist the magnet?'

'And why all this murdering? Sometimes for sins committed five centuries past, while for those five centuries generation was let to go on to follow generation in a darkness out of which no deliverance was offered them; for Israel monopolised God. It is nothing to say these were peculiar exceptive cases. The nation to whom they were given never thought them peculiar cases. And what is Revelation, if it is but a catalogue of examples, not what we are, but what we are not, to follow? *No, Arthur, this is not God — this is a Fiend!*'

From the shelter of his convent Mr. Newman, the former teacher of Mr. J. A. Froude, has also sent forth a novel — a novel of humour, drollery, and sarcasm, directed chiefly against those who, ten years since, were his own zealous and affectionate disciples. The scourge of his contempt is laid with inexorable severity on all who have been weak enough to be dazzled and misled by the glare of his sophistry. In a Book, which Mr. Newman once regarded as the rule of his faith, there is an awful woe denounced on those by whom offences shall come. In reading the work of his brother novelist with that denunciation in his remembrance, Mr. Newman may perhaps have been awakened to some other and less exulting feeling than that of contempt for his dupes. He has consigned one of them, Richard Hurrell Froude,

to lasting ridicule. He has drawn another of them, Mr. J. A. Froude, into the awful responsibility of conceiving in his heart, and publishing with full deliberation, the 'Nemesis of Faith.' Little as is our sympathy with the author of that revolting novel, we have still less fellow-feeling for Mr. Newman, in his new character of Mephistopheles, mocking so merrily at the delusions he has himself propagated, and heedless (as it seems) of their fatal consequences. He is at least entitled to the praise of fairly preparing for the fate which awaits them, any who shall be simple enough to give heed to his present reasonings, to yield to his present persuasions, or to follow his present example.

Let us, however, render to the discarded followers of Mr. Newman the justice which he himself refuses them.

Although the reaction at Oxford seems chiefly to have originated in a certain morbid fastidiousness of taste, yet there was some apology for the indulgence of that feeling; for while the 'Evangelical' teaching had grievously degenerated from the standard of Newton and Scott, of Milner and of Venn, all the more eminent opponents of it who had risen up at that university, were men of letters, and some of them men of large capacity; and they may be forgiven, if they cannot be approved, for the contemptuous spirit in which they contrasted their own intellectual stature with the dwarfish, sterile, rotatory minds of so many of their more conspicuous antagonists. Although this innovation was, in some, but the relapse into the spiritual bondage from which the Reformers had rescued us, yet, in many more, it was a sincere and resolute effort to throw round our Pro-

testant liberties the safeguards of law and order, of reverence, and of hoar antiquity. Although the movement brought into action not a few who, like Mr. Richard Hurrell Froude, could never advance beyond the impertinent minutiæ and the ecclesiastical fopperies which became the badges of their fraternity, yet it called forth a still greater number destined to break up much fallow or neglected ground in the Gospel field, and thence to raise harvests of thought which had never before been gathered in their own generation. And though many of the husbandmen in that field laboured to exalt, beyond all reasonable limits, the authority of ecclesiastical traditions, yet even that attempt may perhaps have been more dangerous in appearance than in reality.

For, in the great cycle of religious controversy, the questions at issue remain very much the same from one age to another, though the terms in which they are stated and discussed are continually shifting. Thus, from the remotest historical era of the Jewish and Christian Churches, the strife between the 'Biblical' and the 'Traditional' parties has been unaltered in substance, though carried on under many different forms of speech. To each of the contending hosts an impartial arbitrament must award a certain measure of truth and justice, and of consequent success. The Biblicists have always maintained that, in every passage of Holy Writ, we are listening to words in which the Deity himself has condescended to afford to us solutions, at once complete and unambiguous, of all the problems in which, as responsible moral agents, we have any concern. The Traditionists have, with similar constancy, alleged that since the creation of our race, those sacred truths by which we are bound to mould our ideas and to regulate

our conduct, have been transmitted from one depository of them (patriarchal or sacerdotal) to another; that, in the Bible, those truths are neither systematically arranged nor logically established, nor even categorically propounded; that they are announced by the inspired writers in language usually so popular and poetical, often so mythic and abrupt, as must unavoidably have induced endless diversities and invincible errors, if there had not been, in the mind of every reader, a preconceived scheme of hereditary doctrine, into the complex harmony of which all scriptural revelations might be first received, and then be adjusted and reconciled. They who adhere, with severe consistency, to the last of these opinions, generally take refuge in the Roman Catholic fold, as the one secure place of shelter from fatal error. They who pursue to its consequences the former of these opinions, for the most part find themselves, at length, astray on the bleak mountains of scepticism, without a track, a resting-place, or a guide.

Neither of these disputants is, however, in point of fact, thus inflexibly self-consistent. Loudly as our 'Tractarians' extol the authority of ecclesiastical tradition, they are not really unconscious into what an abyss they would be conducted by following that guidance alone without an habitual appeal, and a constant reference, to the divine law and to the written testimony. Confidently as our 'evangelical biblicists' proclaim that the 'Bible and the Bible only' is their religion, they still read it inevitably, though often unconsciously, by the light of those very traditions which their theory repudiates.

In the New Atlantis, as we learn from the great circumnavigator who discovered and described it, Christianity was established by the unassisted teach-

ing of a volume in which were written 'all the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments.' It had been placed by St. Bartholomew 'on a great cylindrical pillar of light' on the sea-shore of the island, whence it was devoutly brought for the instruction of the islanders, 'by one of the wise men of the society of Solomon's house.' Francis Bacon, the witness of 'this miraculous evangelism' of the Apostle, has, with characteristic wisdom, abstained from alleging the yet greater miracle, that the Atlantean people had succeeded in extracting from those inestimable leaves any one of the three creeds of the Catholic Church, or any other dogmatic synopsis of the Christian faith. His narrative, on the contrary, implies that, in their theological isolation, neither doctors nor dogmas flourished amongst them;—that, cut off, as they were, from all intercourse with the Fathers, the Schoolmen, and the Reformers, they had found their solitary written guide inexorably silent on many of the most arduous of the questions which most deeply affect the actual condition and the prospects of our race;—that it had never even occurred to them to assign to divinity a place among the sciences;—that they were destitute of all tenets whatever on many of the subjects most insisted on among other Christians, such as original sin, baptismal regeneration, the efficacy of the sacraments, and the like;—and that, although devout and learned above all other people, these mere biblicists of the New Atlantis had never discovered in their language, nor attempted to invent, any terms in which to define either the mysteries of the divine nature, or those of the human nature of the divine Redeemer, or those of His real presence in the consecrated elements. Such, indeed, seems to have been, and such is

probably still, the primitive simplicity of these 'Bible Christians,' that if they shall hereafter be visited by the most 'evangelical' of our missionaries, 'the wise men of the society of Solomon's house,' though they have by heart the volume deposited on the pillar of light, will infallibly astound their visitors by the assurance that they have never perceived in it, nor conjectured that it could contain, either the system of theology which their new teachers will lay before them, or any other theological system whatever.

If a lawyer, educated in this nineteenth century, should say that he had gathered the whole scheme of the British Constitution from the statutes at large, he would be quite as reasonable as a contemporary divine, who should persuade himself that he had deduced his creeds and systematic views of Christian doctrine from the Bible, and the Bible alone. The Doctor, whether he has graduated in law or in divinity, has grown up from the cradle in the arms of traditions, and in the lap of prepossessions, which have indelibly impressed their own character on all the knowledge which he has afterwards derived from his books. We have some myriads of clergymen amongst us, who have subscribed their assent to each of the three confessions of faith which are comprised in the Anglican Liturgy. Will any one of those reverend persons seriously assert that, without the aid of uninspired teaching, he either did discover in the sacred text, or could have discovered there, the whole of any one of those confessions? or that, if confined to the study of that text alone, he would have detected a fatal error in the opinion of the 'Similarity of Substance?'—a vital truth in the opinion of the 'Identity of Substance;' or that he would have learnt that between the inversion of the words 'Begotten not made,' and the retaining

those words in their present order, there lay all the difference of a deadly heresy and an orthodox belief?

Unwelcome as such a conclusion must be to any controversialists, it seems inevitable to conclude that the Traditional party is far more biblical, and the Biblical party very far more traditional, than either of them are willing to suppose, whether of their opponents, or of themselves. Except by those who rush either into the extreme of spiritual bondage, or into the excesses of spiritual anarchy, these conflicting opinions are held on both sides, with such great, though unavowed qualifications, as render them far more innoxious, in fact, than might be anticipated, from the incautious language of the disputants. To be thus unconsciously at variance with oneself, is a mental weakness, which, in a greater or less degree, is only not universal. Many a man prostrates himself before the shrine of the Virgin, in whose heart the spirit of the Bible neutralises the superstition which it has not subdued. Many a man worships in all the naked simplicity of Geneva, in whose mind the traditions of the Church controul the lawless licence with which he boasts, and believes, that he interprets the Scriptures for himself.

Yet since, for the hearts of most of us, slavery has more attractions than freedom — since it leads to far more fatal evils — and since it much more effectually debars us from the highest good — so is there far greater cause to deprecate the dangers of the traditional, than those of the biblical, system of belief. For all traditional knowledge is deeply imbued with the infirmities and the corruptions of the human agency through which it reaches us. It ever tends to crystallise into brilliant, but cold, hard, and profitless theories. But biblical knowledge, like the manna

rained on the wilderness, ever tends to dissolve into a warm, and generous, and healthful nutriment. From ecclesiastical lore we learn how to be subtle in distinctions, exact in the analysis of particular doctrines, and clear-sighted in the synthesis of them all. But from the Bible, and from the Bible alone, we may derive, though with no scientific accuracy, and by no logical process, the one great, prolific, and all-embracing idea — even the idea of Him in whom we live, and move, and have our being. There also, and there only, we learn all that is to be known, or rather all that is to be felt and experienced, of our relations to Him — how they have been impaired by sin, and how they have been restored by an adorable, though utterly inscrutable, atonement. There also we discover what are the spiritual agencies employed for the restoration of our nature to its primeval image. There, too, is lifted the veil which interposes between our present and our future state, so far as to disclose to us that this 'mortal is to put on immortality.' There, in no recondite learning, no abstruse speculation, nor in any abstract creed, but in the very person of Christ himself, is exhibited to us the Way, the Truth, and the Life. There we may contemplate and listen to Him, who is the 'Word,' or communicative energy, of God. There is set before us the very image of Deity, so far as it can be projected on the dark and contracted mirror of our feeble humanity. There we become cognisant of a spiritual relationship — a consanguinity of the soul of man with Him who assumed man's nature — an alliance which, though human words can but ill express it, the gospels reveal to us as not less real, and as far more intimate and enduring, than those which bind us to each other in domestic life.

These, and such as these, are the disclosures which day by day dawn with still increasing brightness on him who continually refers to the revealed Word of God for light, and day by day examines by that light every theological opinion which he has gathered from any other source. It is because the fathers of the 'Evangelical succession' thus continually resorted to Holy Scripture as at once the ultimate source and the one criterion of all religious truth, that we reverently hail them as the restorers and witnesses of the faith in their own and in succeeding generations. It is in proportion as they who now sit in their seats are in this respect imitating their example, that we assign to them also their measure of the same honour. But we do not judge that the like homage may not be reasonably rendered to many, who, taking their departure from what is evidently a distant, and apparently an opposite point, are yet conducted, even by their reverence for ecclesiastical traditions, to the feet of the same great Teacher, and who study His recorded life and language with the same childlike affiance and unreserved docility. In the presence of their common enemies, Sin and Ignorance, Superstition and Idolatry, our teachers would, we think, do wisely to abate much of their mutual alienation and distrust. Their disciples can, we trust, not be doing ill, or interposing presumptuously, by any attempt, however humble, to promote such reconcilement.

WILLIAM WILBERFORCE.

Biography must be parsimonious of her honours; yet, even in the age of Burke and Mirabeau, of Napoleon and Wellington, of Goethe and of Walter Scott, she could not have justly refused them to one who, by paths till then untrodden, reached a social and political eminence, never before attained by any man unaided by place, by party, or by the sword.

William Wilberforce was born at Hull, on the 24th of August, 1759. His father, a merchant of that town, traced his descent from a family which had for many generations possessed a large estate at Wilberfoss, in the East Riding of the county of York. From that place was derived the name which the taste or the caprice of his later progenitors moulded into the form in which it was borne by their celebrated descendant. His mother was nearly allied to many persons of consideration, among whom may be numbered the present Archbishop of Canterbury, the Bishop of Winchester, and the members of that great London banking house of which Lord Carrington was formerly the head.

In the commencement of the reign of George III., the Grammar School of Hull was kept by Joseph Milner, the Church historian, assisted by his brother Isaac, who afterwards rose to great academical honours and emoluments in the University of

Cambridge. To attend their lectures, William Wilberforce, then a sickly and diminutive child, might be daily seen passing along the streets of his native town with his satchell on his shoulder. Even at that early age he was himself appointed to teach. So rich were the tones of his voice, and such the grace and impressiveness with which it was modulated, that the Milners would lift him on the table, that his schoolfellows might admire and imitate such a model in the art of recitation. At a far distant period the same matchless voice was to be employed in courts and parliaments, in defence of the theological system, among the confessors and advocates of which each of his tutors was destined to hold a distinguished station.

The father of William Wilberforce died before his son had completed his tenth year, and the ample patrimony which he then inherited was afterwards largely increased on the death of a paternal uncle, to whose guardianship his childhood was committed. By that kinsman he was placed at a school in the immediate neighbourhood of his own residence, at Wimbledon in Surrey. The following are the characteristic terms in which, many years afterwards, the pupil recorded his recollections of this second stage of his literary education. 'Mr. Chalmers the master, himself a Scotchman, had an usher of the same nation, whose red beard, for he scarcely shaved once a month, I shall never forget. They taught French, arithmetic, and Latin. With Greek we did not much meddle. It was frequented chiefly by the sons of merchants, and they taught, therefore, every thing and nothing. Here I continued some time as a parlour boarder. I was sent at first among the lodgers, and I can remember even now the nauseous

food with which we were supplied, and which I could not eat without sickness.'

His early years were not, however, to pass away without some impressions more important and not less abiding than those which had been left on his sensitive nerves by the red beard of one of his Scotch teachers, and by the ill savour of the dinners of the other. His uncle's wife was a disciple of George Whitfield, and, under her pious care, he acquired a familiarity with the sacred writings, and a habit of devotion, the results of which were perceptible throughout the whole of his more mature life. While yet a school-boy, he had written several religious letters, 'much in accordance with the opinions which he subsequently adopted,' and which, but for his peremptory interdict, the zeal of some indiscreet friend would have given to the world. On looking back, after a long interval, to this part of his youthful training, Mr. Wilberforce summed up, in the following pithy sentence, his estimate of its apparent tendency: 'If I had staid with my uncle I should probably have been a bigoted, despised Methodist.' His mother's earlier sagacity foresaw what her son's later experience discovered, and by her he was withdrawn from Wimbledon, and initiated into the amusements and luxuries of his native city.

The escape from methodism, bigotry, and contempt, was complete. The youth sang, danced, and feasted with the wealthier inhabitants of Hull, endured their card parties, and admired their strolling players; and, lest these spells should be too weak to cast out the Whitfield spirit from his mind, he was committed by the same maternal prescience to the care of a professional exorcist of such demons. He was a sound and well-beneficed divine, a polished gentleman, an

elegant scholar, and master of the endowed grammar school of Pocklington. To him his pupil was indebted for some general knowledge of polite literature, and for an intimate acquaintance with the best dinner tables in that part of the county of York. From this easy thrall he passed, at the age of seventeen, to St. John's College, Cambridge, not without a tincture of learning more than sufficient for the plausibilities of the literary character which he was there to sustain.

No better choice could have been made, if the object of his residence at the University had been to repress any aspirations towards scholarship of a higher order. His companions were hard-drinking licentious youths, whose talk was even worse than their lives. His teachers did their best to make and to keep him idle. The single problem proposed for his solution was, 'Why so rich a man should trouble himself with fagging?' and no Johnian Archimedes could find the answer. Euclid and Newton were abandoned for whist, and Thucydides for such other pastimes as collegiate dulness loves best. With a great Yorkshire pie crowning his table, and with wit, drollery, and song ever flowing from his lips, the child of fortune passed through his academical course, the centre of that never-failing crowd, whose aim it is to eat without cost, and to be amused without effort.

'That complete and generous education which fits a man to perform justly, skilfully, and magnanimously, all the offices, both public and private, of peace and war,' was not to be acquired under such teachers or among such associates. Yet scarcely had Mr. Wilberforce shaken off that alliance, than he entered on one of the noblest and most difficult of those offices. Within six weeks from the sumptuous celebration of

the day on which he attained his majority, he found himself, by the expenditure among the electors of Hull of more than 8000*l.*, their representative in the House of Commons.

To make laws is the single employment of adult life which is supposed to require no preparatory study; which may be one of the reasons why the studies of half a life are too little for the right interpretation of such laws as our legislators make. The young member for Hull, conscious as he was of his ignorance, may yet have sustained himself with the conviction that he would meet in Parliament with many as ill-provided as he was with political science, and scarcely with any one so well qualified by the mere instinct of natural sagacity to discuss any question, however unfamiliar, or to adorn it by the embellishments of an insinuating address, a playful fancy, a brave self-reliance, and a voice which resembled an Eolian harp controlled by the touch of a St. Cecilia.

He had, indeed, come up to London (such was his rustic simplicity) 'stored with arguments to prove the authenticity of Rowley's poems,' unconscious that, among the gay circle awaiting him, the sermons delivered in the pulpit of St. Mary Redcliffe would have been just as welcome as a debate on the parchments discovered in her tower. Brookes's, White's, and Boodle's received him with open arms. George Selwyn stood sentinel at the faro-table to keep away any intrusive good advice. With Fox, Fitzpatrick, and Sheridan he chatted, or played at cards or dice, according to the humour of the moment. His suppers were taken at a club of which William Pitt, Lord Grenville, and Windham were assiduous members. At a Shaksperian party at the Boar's Head he ad-

mired the surpassing brilliancy of Pitt, 'the wittiest man' (such is his record of that evening) 'he ever knew; to whose mind every possible combination of ideas seemed always present, and who could at once produce whatever he desired.' At Wimbledon the ghost of his pious aunt might have awakened from the tomb to see Lord Harrowby, her nephew's guest, alight, not long before sunrise, at the gates which once were her's, wearing the triangular hat which had clung by him at the Opera, and, not long after the sun had risen, William Pitt, another of his guests, industriously sowing her once-loved flower-beds with the fragments of it, in order, as he declared, to raise a crop of new ones. At Burlington House Mrs. Sheridan sang to him 'old English songs angelically.' At Devonshire House he was himself required to sing by no mean judge in such matters, George, the too famous Prince of Wales. One while passing an evening with Mrs. Siddons, at another exchanging repartees with the 'charming Mrs. Crewe,' and occasionally speaking with applause in St. Stephen's Chapel (in those days the best and most fashionable of debating societies), he floated with the gay crowd down the smooth current of early life, until the resignation of the Shelburne ministry restored Mr. Pitt to leisure, and enabled the two friends, accompanied by Mr. Eliot (dear alike to both of them), to project and execute a summer tour in France.

This 'march of the allies to Paris' was directed through the ancient city of Rheims. As the school in which the future minister of England and his friends were to study the French language, no place could have been more judiciously chosen; for, as M. Guizot teaches us, it is the sacred fountain from whence have flowed all the streams of our modern

civilisation. Yet in the year 1783 Rheims failed to impart to her English visitors the knowledge which they had proposed to gather there. 'We spent nine or ten days without making any great progress,' says Mr. Wilberforce, 'which,' he adds, 'could not indeed be expected of us, as we spoke to no human being but each other, and our Irish courier.' Ten years later such a secret conclave of foreigners in the metropolis of an English province, would have excited the jealousy of Mr. Pitt himself. Little marvel, then, that in the capital of Champagne it attracted the inquisitive eye of M. Du Chatel, the Royal Intendant of Police. Who might these mysterious strangers be? Were they hatching a conspiracy against the great ally of Washington?—England had bitter humiliations to avenge. Or were they in an alliance with Count Cagliostro against the purses of his most Christian Majesty's subjects?—England, impoverished by war, was the too fertile parent of swindlers seeking after their prey. M. Du Chatel must look to it!

There was at Rheims, in those days, an Abbé de Legeard, 'a fellow of infinite humour,' to whom the Intendant disclosed his suspicions. The Abbé undertook a domiciliary visit to the intrigants. He found them as full of humour as himself, liked their appearance, their manners, and their talk, and ended at last by a cordial tender to them of his good services.

The son of Chatham stood then in urgent need of such subsidies as he was destined at a future day to lavish. 'Here we are,' he exclaimed to the fascinated Abbé, 'in the middle of Champagne, and can't get any tolerable wine!' The Abbé was moved. In his own cellars was some of the choicest, and it crowned

his hospitable board, during five or six successive hours, for the exhilaration of his English guests—a symposium doubtless of infinite hilarity, fearful as may have been its length, to the courteous Frenchman.

Rheims began to assume a brighter aspect. Either the future agitator of Europe, or the future liberator of Africa (history does not say which), had been the bearer of an introduction to M. Coustier, of that city, from the great Peter Thellusson, and to the hotel of M. Coustier, their coachman was directed to drive. 'It was with some surprise that we found him' (such is Mr. Wilberforce's contemporary narrative), 'behind a counter distributing raisins. I had heard that it was very usual for gentlemen on the Continent to practise some handicraft trade or other for their amusement, and therefore, for my own part, I concluded that his taste was in the fig way, and that he was only playing at grocer for his amusement; and, viewing the matter in this light, I could not help admiring the excellence of his imitation.' A genuine grocer, however, was M. Coustier. But he was *un brave homme* to boot, and at the request of milords Anglais mounted his wig and sword, and ushered them to the house of one of his best customers among the noblesse. This was no other than M. Du Chatel himself. 'Relations of peace and amity' were established between the Intendant and the suspects. He introduced them to the Archbishop, and the Archbishop gave them 'two very good and pleasant dinners,' with an invitation to spend a week at his palace. The following is the portrait which Mr. Wilberforce has bequeathed to posterity of this agreeable prelate. 'Archbishops in England are not like archbishops in France. These last are jolly fellows, of about forty

years of age, who play at billiards, and live like other people.'

In October Paris opened her gates to the three members of the British Parliament. Mr. Wilberforce's memorabilia of their sojourn there resemble the brief notes so often found in the hands of 'honourable gentlemen' when rising to take part in a debate. From these fragments, however, we collect that they associated with Vergennes, La Fayette, and Marmontel—that they followed the court to Fontainbleau —that there Mr. Pitt hunted the stag on horseback, while his companions in a chaise hunted the boar—that Louis XVI. on that occasion presented himself 'in immense boots, a clumsy strange figure, of the hog kind'—that at Madame de Polignac's 'poor Marie Antoinette chatted easily,' and rallied them with inquiries after their friend M. Coustier, the *épicier*—that they passed an evening with Benjamin Franklin—that 'all the men and women crowded round Pitt in shoals, who behaved with great spirit, though he was sometimes a little bored when they talked to him about 'the Parliamentary Reform'—and that he was at length rescued from the crowd of his admirers by Iris, who, in the shape of a king's messenger, suddenly appeared at Paris, charged with despatches from the Jupiter Londinensis.

The object of this royal summons was to secure the aid of Mr. Pitt in opposing the India Bill, and in turning out the authors of it. He obeyed; and in the struggle in which he was soon afterwards engaged with the majority of the House of Commons, he found no more zealous or effective supporter than the partaker of his amusements at Paris and at Rheims.

The Coalition Ministry was now the one object of popular invective; and, at a public meeting in

the Castle Yard at York, in March, 1784, Mr. Wilberforce, in a speech, welcomed with the loudest plaudits, contributed his share of invective against the Unholy Alliance. In an account of the scene which he transmitted to Mr. Dundas, James Boswell described it in terms equally characteristic of the speaker and of himself. 'I saw,' he says, 'what seemed a mere shrimp mount upon the table, but, as I listened, he grew and grew until the shrimp became a whale.'

A still more convincing attestation of his eloquence on this occasion is to be found in the consequences to which it led. Mr. Wilberforce had attended this meeting with the avowed purpose of defeating the influence of the great Whig families of Yorkshire at the approaching general election, and with the unavowed purpose of becoming himself a candidate for the county. From 'Wilberforce and Liberty,' the cry raised by his auditors while he spoke, the transition was obvious and easy to the cry of 'Wilberforce for Yorkshire' when he concluded. The current of popular favour flowed strongly in his support, for he appeared as the tribune of the people against the patricians of the North; he had opposed the India Bill; he had denounced the Coalition; and he enjoyed the personal affection of Mr. Pitt, then rich in hereditary honours, in personal renown, and in the brightest promise. Large subscriptions defrayed the expense of the contest, and his aristocratic opponents, without venturing to the poll, surrendered to him a seat which he continued to occupy without intermission in many successive Parliaments.

With this memorable triumph, Mr. Wilberforce closed his twenty-fifth year. He was now in possession of whatever could exalt the hopes of a candidate for fame on the noblest theatre of civil action

which at that period had ever been thrown open to the ambition of private men. But the appointed hour had also struck from which a new direction was to be given to the thoughts and the pursuits of this favourite of nature and of fortune.

Accompanied by some of his female relatives, and by Isaac Milner, one of his two earliest tutors, the new member for the county of York, before appearing in the House of Commons in that capacity, undertook a journey to the south of France, and thence through Switzerland to Spa. This expedition (interrupted by a brief return to England in the winter of 1784—5) was extended during some months, and forms a memorable era in his life. The lessons he had learnt in childhood at Wimbledon, had left an indelible impression on his mind. The dissipation of his subsequent days had but retarded the growth of those seeds of early piety. The companions of his youth had not been without frequent intimations that their gay associate was silently revolving deeper thoughts than those which formed the staple of their ordinary social intercourse. These were now to take entire possession of his mind, and to become the life and mainsprings of his future existence. The opinions of George Whitfield had found a more impressive expositor than the good lady who had originally inculcated them upon him.

Isaac Milner was a man of strong native sense, and of no inconsiderable learning, and would probably have attained to celebrity, both in science and in theology, if the too early possession of three rich ecclesiastical and academic sinecures had not enabled him to gratify his constitutional indolence. In a narrow collegiate circle he exercised a colloquial despotism akin to that which Samuel Johnson had

enjoyed, and to which Samuel Parr had aspired, among the men of letters and statesmen of their age. But Milner's dogmatism was relieved by a tenderness of heart not inferior to that of the great lexicographer, and was informed by a divinity incomparably more profound than that of the grandiloquent grammarian. He was among the dearest of the friends of Mr. Wilberforce, and now became his spiritual preceptor and guide.

And now our narrative has reached a point at which the ground over which we have to pass becomes tremulous and unstable. If we adopt the orthodox style of the Episcopalian Churches, we must record that 'the baptismal seed, long dormant in the soul of Isaac Milner's pupil, began at length to germinate and to yield its fruit.' If we prefer the language of a more popular theology, it must be stated that 'the conversion of Mr. Wilberforce took place in the twenty-sixth year of his age, and during his journey to Nice.' There are, we doubt not, those to whom each of these forms of speech conveys an intelligible meaning. But there are others who can perceive in them nothing more than abstruse metaphors or rhetorical tropes; and they, in a deep consciousness of their own ignorance, referring all such mysteries both to that revelation of the divine will which is 'written with ink,' and to that other revelation of it which is written 'on the fleshly tables of the heart,' will learn from each of those revelations that the human mind is subject to a sacred influence, which, like the wind, bloweth where it listeth, although it be given to none to discover whence it cometh or whither it goeth.

It is a fact, which few, if any, self-observers will deny, that, in the interior life of every man, there are occurrences explicable on no hypothesis but that of

the direct intervention of the Supreme Ruler of the Universe for the spiritual improvement of his rational creatures. Such events may be considered either as parts of some great predetermined system, or as immediate interpositions of the Deity in particular cases. Each supposition alike refers to that divine origin those salutary changes in human character which the least thoughtful so often notice, and which even the most depraved not seldom undergo.

Such a change, when enduring and complete, is designated in the familiar theological terminology as 'a new birth;' and if it be allowable to assign a definite sense to a phrase so much darkened by the rhetorical use of it, 'the new birth' may be said to consist in the progressive coincidence of inclination and of duty, or in the divorce of obedience from self-denial. A slow, a laborious, and an imperfect process indeed with the best of us! Yet, in very many, an evident reality attested by the most conclusive proofs. The very day-dreams on this subject, which are floating in most minds, and in most societies, are themselves a sufficient evidence of the existence of substantial things on which they rest as a basis, and which they indistinctly reflect and dimly shadow forth to us.

But when such a phenomenon is alleged by the biographers of any man, they are bound to distinguish, as clearly as may be, between his original and his superinduced character, and to explain, in unambiguous language, in what the new man differed from the old. A hard necessity, if not a desperate attempt! Yet an attempt to be reverently made, if we would not dismiss, unsolved and unexamined, the most curious problem which the life of Mr. Wilberforce raises or suggests.

Man, as he is delineated by the great masters of fiction, is made up of elements which are at once incongruous, inharmonious, conflicting, and yet compatible. Man, as he is drawn by inferior artists, is the impersonation of some one dominant propensity which possesses, guides, and individualises him. Thus Lawrence Sterne has filled up his canvass with four figures, each of whom, like one of Joanna Baillie's heroes, is in bondage to some one tyrannical passion. To Mr. Shandy is assigned the love of wisdom, — to Uncle Toby the wisdom of love, — to Corporal Trim heart-loyalty to his captain, — and to Yorick a versatile sympathy, by which the humours of all the rest are caught, and heightened, and reflected. Shakspeare or Cervantes would have known how to blend the whole group into one complex man — a composite yet not irreconcileable assemblage of dissimilar qualities — a veritable unit of the race of Adam. Such an imaginary personage would have borne a vivid resemblance to the *aboriginal* William Wilberforce.

By force of a decree preceding his birth, he came into the world predestined to be the centre of admiration and of love for the circle of his associates in it. Nature herself endowed him with that genial warmth and graciousness of temper which, by a constant succession of spontaneous impulses, pours itself into all the channels of social intercourse. Towards all who approached him, those kindnesses which, unless when innate are unattainable, expanded with such a happy promptitude, that, to borrow a well-known eulogy, he might have passed for the brother of every man, and for the lover of every woman, with whom he conversed.

This instinct of philanthropy was combined with a mercurial gaiety, and with that exquisite perception of

all the proprieties of life, which, in mesmeric language, places cultivated minds in 'a relation of mutual consciousness towards each other.' Every eye which followed him beamed with the lights, or was darkened by the shadows, which played over his countenance; and his feelings, whether grave or gay, vibrated through every point of the circle by which he was surrounded.

The basis of the natural or indigenous character of Mr. Wilberforce was laid in this quick fellow-feeling with other men. All the restless vivacity of Voltaire, and a sensibility more profound than that of Rousseau, met in him and mutually controlled each other. His responsiveness to the joys and the sorrows of his companions made the happy and the wretched his captives in their turns. But, though ready to weep with those who wept, he was still more prompt to rejoice with those that rejoiced; nor could the elastic rebound of his heart to gladness be ever long repressed by any burthen, whether laid on others or on himself.

Society was not merely his delight or his passion; it was the necessity of his existence. He mixed freely, and on equal terms, with all the men and women of his age the most eminent in wit, in genius, and in learning; and drank in, with the keenest relish, every variety of colloquial eloquence. Yet he not merely endured but rejoiced in companions, whose absence would have been a luxury to any one but himself. When Pitt, and Burke, and Sheridan were not to be had, he would take the most cordial pleasure in the talk of the most woollen of his constituents at Leeds. When Madame de Stael and Mrs. Crewe were away, some dowager from the Cathedral Whist Club became his inspiring muse, and, for the

moment, would seem herself to be half inspired. Dulness fled at his approach. The most somnolent awakened at his presence. The heaviest countenance caught some animation from his eye. 'The listless prisoner of an easy chair' gave out some sparks of intellect when brought into a friendly collision with him.

Reckless is the liberality which bestows rank, wealth, beauty, and prowess so lavishly on the preux chevalier of romance. He enjoys those exterior advantages at the expense of his essential greatness. But the charm exercised by Mr. Wilberforce, was the inherent and indefeasible attribute of the soul herself. Informed by her, the body which, with all affection and reverence be it spoken, was but a caricature of the human form divine, became the ready minister of all his social purposes, and the eloquent interpreter of all his emotions. Before his fellow-men, that diminutive and shapeless figure bore it lf gallantly, as if elevated and sustained by conscious worth. Towards the other sex, his attitudes and looks and bearing expressed a respect and a tenderness so heartfelt and so grateful, as to impart to the humblest woman he addressed a sense of self-complacency; and as to fascinate those who were themselves the most skilful in the arts of fascination. Bayard, accosting a damsel of the House of Longueville, could not have carried himself with a more gentle and generous courtesy.

There is an association of certain indissoluble ideas which degrades the histrionic art in general esteem, yet the faculty of exhibiting and exciting every human sentiment is a power which, though too often desecrated to the meanest ends, may be devoted to the noblest. Mr. Wilberforce was, by the gift of nature, amongst the most consummate actors of his times. Imagine David Garrick — talking, not as a

mime, but from the resources of his own mind, and the impulses of his own nature — to have personated in some other society the friends with whom he had been dining at the Literary Club, — now uttering maxims of wisdom with Johnsonian dignity—then haranguing with a rapture like that of Burke — telling a good story with the unction of James Boswell — chuckling over a ludicrous jest with the child-like glee of Oliver Goldsmith — singing a ballad with all the taste of Percy — reciting poetry with the classical enthusiasm of Cumberland — and, at each successive change in this interlude, exhibiting the amenities of Sir Joshua — then brood a while over this supposed monopolylogue, and there will emerge an image of the social William Wilberforce, ever the same, and ever multiform, constraining his companions to laugh, to weep, to admire, to exult, and to meditate at his bidding.

This rare felic' y in running over the whole scale of feeling, and the refinement which rescued him, at each successive passage, from every taint of affectation or of coarseness, gave to his discourse a far deeper interest than would have belonged to the mere words he uttered, if falling from any lips but his own. A certain air of originality embellished the most trite and familiar of his observations. There was still an impress of novelty when he repeated for the twentieth time some favourite maxim, or told over again some well-known story, or resumed the discussion of yesterday from the very beginning. In 'The Doctor,' Southey has drawn an inverted pyramid, the narrowing lines of which represent the subsiding cadences in which he supposes Mr. Wilberforce to repeat the words, 'Poor creature!' when advised by the anonymous author to read his book on a Sunday; each cadence in its turn being meant

to convey a rebuke in which kindness and acidity, liking and dislike, acquiescence and dissent meet together in continually varying proportions. Now this is hardly a burlesque. The words, however simple, which Mr. Wilberforce selected as the vehicle of any passion, became, in his use of them, as replete with significance as those homely phrases with which Mrs. Siddons was accustomed to awaken the loudest echoes of the theatre. The expression 'Poor creature!' modulated, and varied, and played with, as he would have managed it, would have formed an exquisite criticism on the favourite work of the Laureate, with all its graceful pathos and unmirthful jocularity.

In the age of Jekyll, Mackintosh, and Sydney Smith, society had no member more popular or more attractive than William Wilberforce. At one time obeying the impulse of the moment, at another pursuing the train of his solitary musing, he passed and repassed from the merest frolic of fancy to the most mature contemplations, the same simple-hearted natural man, talking, without effort, or preparation, or disguise, from the overflowing of his mind, although his voice and manner, and the whole structure of his dialogue, were in a state of constant vicissitude. Yet scarcely any memorial of his table-talk has survived him, nor is it difficult to explain the reason.

Wit may either pervade a man's conversation, or be condensed in particular passages of it, as the electric current may be either equally diffused through the atmosphere, or flash across it. Mr. Wilberforce turned on every topic which he touched a sort of galvanic stream of vivacity, humour, and warm-heartedness, which tended rather to volatilise and to disperse, than to consolidate, the substances on which it fell. He did not dispose of a laughable

incident by one terse and pregnant jest, he rather used it as a toy to be tossed about and played with for a while, and then thrown aside. Even his wisdom demanded a certain breadth of space for its development, for it incorporated every illustration, pleasant or pathetic, which fell in his way, and left behind it an impression more delightful than definite. Being himself amused and interested by every thing, whatever he said became amusing or interesting. Sometimes Francis Bacon would supply the text, and sometimes Sir John Sinclair; but whether he fused the pure gold of the sage, or brayed, as in a mortar, the crotchets of the simpleton, the comment was irresistibly charming, though no memory could retain the glowing, picturesque, or comic language in which it was delivered. When he and Sydney Smith left the same dinner table, their companions carried away some of the solid bullion of wit from the Canon of St. Paul's to be exhibited in other company; but from the member for the county of York, recollections which, though not transferable to others by any quotation of his words, dwelt with themselves as an exhilarating influence, like that of some joyous carol or pungent æther.

If it be required that the eulogies on his colloquial powers should be justified more distinctly than by this kind of general description, the demand will perhaps be best satisfied by referring to his letters. It must indeed be admitted that his epistolary style is far below that of the great writers in that kind, and below his own reputation; that his sport is not very graceful, nor his tenderness very touching, nor his gravity very impressive. But suppose a man continually pouring forth, in his common talk, language as brilliant as that in which he writes to Hannah More, or as playful as that in which he rallies Lord

Muncaster, or as full of deep meaning as that in which he unbosoms himself to William Hey, or as affectionate as the style of his letters to his sons; and suppose that his discourse is continually embellished by the most perfect histrionic ornaments; and the supposition will render Mr. Wilberforce audible and visible to the imaginations of those who never heard or saw him, very much as he was to the bodily organs of those who lived with him in familiar intimacy.

His social passion, and his social talents, clung to him even when he quitted the throng of men for the solitude of his library. Although a stranger to all the exact sciences, whether physical or moral, and though neither born nor educated to be himself a great author, he was yet the happy comrade, the docile pupil, and the enthusiastic admirer of the greatest. After having lost the sight of one of his eyes, and while sorely annoyed by the ailments of the other, he ran over with eagerness, and appreciated with curious felicity, a greater body of literature than is usually compassed by those who devote themselves exclusively to letters.

It was, indeed, an ill-assorted, and heterogeneous mass, made up of history, morals, philosophy, poetry, statistics, ephemeral politics, and theology; yet it was not without a certain unity of design, that these were all in turn either lightly skimmed, or diligently studied. He was never abandoned by his human affections, even when his books were his only companions. He searched them to detect the various springs of human action, and their influence on the welfare of the great brotherhood he loved so well. He learned from them to understand, and so to benefit, mankind. Nor, in his intercourse with these mute teachers, was he deserted by the tricksy Ariel, who inspired his

carriage and his talk in the haunts of living men. That brilliant fancy broke out into a ceaseless colloquy with the grave masters at whose feet he sat. He would controvert, interrogate, or applaud in the form of marginal notes, when he was alone; or, if an auditor was at hand, in spoken comments, at one moment so arch and humorous, at the next so reverent and affectionate, and then so full of solemn meaning, that the austere folio, or the saucy pamphlet, became so many characters in a sort of tragi-comedy; in which, however, there was usually a large preponderance of the droll above the serious.

For so arbitrary were the associations of his ideas, such the revelry of his animal life, and so tumultuous the flow of his thoughts, that if his presence had not been fatal to fatigue, the rapid transitions through which the interlocutor in any dialogue with him was hurried, might have perplexed and wearied the most patient listener. In his most playful moods, reverence for all that he esteemed great and holy would arrest at an instant the riot of his spirits; and, when elevated to the highest contemplations, some odd conceit would lighten up his face with unexpected smiles, and break forth in a burst of contagious merriment.

It was difficult or impossible to take a deliberate measure of the intellectual stature of such a companion; nor was it until time and distance had subdued the power of the charm, and diminished the accuracy of the remembrance of it, that they who lived with him could make any successful attempt to estimate and analyse the powers by which they had been dazzled. The result of that tardy effort was to induce the conviction that the master of the spell had not received from on high a commission to disclose hidden truth, or to throw over familiar truth the

mantle of a creative imagination — that he never held, nor could ever have attained, to a place among philosophers or poets — and that nature had not formed him for patient inquiry, suspended judgment, or for faith in the glorious unrealities of fiction. But if not permitted to take his stand within the innermost circle of genius, he derived from nature such rapidity of conception — such an intuitive insight into the characters of other men — such a sense of the ludicrous and of the tender — a wit vaulting so lightly across his whole visible horizon — and so ardent a love for every form of beauty, as justified the enthusiasm of his admirers, although his name would scarcely have descended to posterity if he had devoted himself to any other than an active life.

And now, whether it be more fitly called the tardy ripening of baptismal seed, or an early conversion, or by whatever other theological term the event may be most properly described, it came to pass that he was roused and qualified for that course of life, by the great though gradual change to which we have referred. 'To be born again' is to acquire, not new powers, but a new tendency of the powers which we derive from nature. William Wilberforce, the pupil of George Selwyn, and William Wilberforce, the pupil of John Newton, were not two different men, but one and the same man. Yet his two preceptors did not differ more widely from each other than he differed from his former self. Before him had opened a new world, and within him a new creation. From an intoxicating intercourse with human society, he had withdrawn to commune with himself. From self-acquaintance he had ascended to communicate with the eternal source of light. Faith had revealed to him the illusions of sight, and motives had sprung up

in his mind of an energy in some degree commensurate with the invisible realities which she disclosed to him. His social feelings, which had traversed the earth unsatisfied, now found their resting-place in the Redeemer, who henceforth became the ever-present associate of his hopes and purposes. The new fabric of thoughts and of affections which arose within him, rested on a basis more firm than he had ever found before, because cemented and sustained by divine, as well as by human, love.

It was, indeed, with deep dejection and a protracted self-conflict, that these new habits of mind were formed. Gradually and surely, however, the joyful spirit of the man reassumed its dominion over him. The frolic of earlier years had subsided, and his gaiety assumed a more cautious and a gentler character. But as his self-government gained strength, and as peace diffused her holy calm over him, he rose to the enjoyment of that perfect freedom in which even *his* constitutional hilarity could indulge and disport itself. Still sadness flew at his approach; and, though the most devout of men, his mirth was as exhilarating as the first laughter of childhood.

God was in all his thoughts. His piety was allied not only to his serious pursuits, but to all the daily pleasures, and even to the whims and amusements of life. Inhabiting at once the visible and the invisible worlds, he rejoiced over his bright heritage in each. From the passing shadows of earth to the enduring substances of heaven, from secular cares to devotional exercises, he moved with such unexpected rapidity, that the web of his discourse would sometimes appear to be of an incongruous colouring and texture. But this fusion of religious and worldly thoughts enhanced the spirit with which he performed

every duty, and the zest with which he welcomed every enjoyment.

Faintly as any portraiture can represent Mr. Wilberforce in his relations with other men, it is altogether impossible that he should be properly delineated in these dearer and more sacred relations which he had now formed. If any one shall refer to mere enthusiasm, the belief that the regenerate heart maintains a real, although it be a hidden, intercourse with a Being who has taken up his abode there, we shall leave the censor in undisturbed possession of his incredulity. If he shall deny that any sound mind can entertain such a belief, we shall be content to assure him that there are, in the character of man, mysteries of which he has as yet no knowledge. But if he shall assert that the intercourse between the soul and the indwelling Paraclete cannot be recorded by the written confessions, experiences, or revelations of any self-observer whatever, we have no controversy with him, but the reverse.

It was the habit of Mr. Wilberforce to transcribe in a private journal the results of a most unsparing self-examination, not unmixed with some passages from those prayers in which he was engaged 'without ceasing.' The extracts from those manuscripts which his biographers have published, bear the impress of the most perfect sincerity. They attest his exquisite tenderness of conscience, his constant sense of present Deity, and his intense solicitude for an entire conformity to the Divine will. Doubtless these were inestimable aids to himself in his daily retrospect of his own spiritual progress. But, having served that purpose, would they not have been more wisely committed to the flames, than to the press?

Such publications too often foster in those who

read them, a rank undergrowth of hypocrisy. For one man, who, like Mr. Wilberforce, will honestly endeavour to lay bare on paper the course of his life and the state of his heart, one hundred will make the same attempt dishonestly, having the fear or the hope of the biographer before their eyes. How fluent the acknowledgment of those faults which the reader will certainly regard as venial, while he admires the sagacity which has detected, the humility which has condemned, and the integrity which has acknowledged them!

Such disclosures, whether made to the confessor or to the world at large, are at best an illusion. No man has such an insight into his own circumstances, motives, and actions, or such leisure for describing them, or such powers of description, as to be able to afford to others the means of estimating, with any approach to accuracy, the exact merit or demerit of any one of his steps (and countless are the millions of these steps) in his whole moral and religious course.

Or, if the dissection of any man's soul could be completely effected, what eye but must turn away from the spectacle? Wisely has the Church proclaimed the sanctity of the confessional. Who would wish or dare to study this morbid anatomy? Who would not loathe the knowledge with which the memory of the priesthood, who study it professionally, is soiled and burthened? Who has courage enough to tell how far our mutual affection and esteem may depend on our imperfect knowledge of each other? The same creative wisdom which shelters from every human eye the processes of our animal frame, has shrouded from observation the workings of our spiritual structure. The lowly and the contrite heart is a shrine in which He who inhabiteth eternity con-

descends to dwell, but in which any other presence would be an agony and a profanation.

We have three judges — our Maker, ourselves, and our neighbour. The first, looking on the heart, adjudicates infallibly. The second, from a comparison of acts, and of motives imperfectly understood, determines inferentially. The third, observing only the outward conduct, decides hypothetically. He who knew what was in man, confined us to the use of a single clue in forming any such hypothesis — 'By their fruits ye shall know them.' Whether we study Mr. Wilberforce, or any other human model, it is safest to follow this clue, and this alone.

Exceedingly dissimilar in abundance and in flavour, are the fruits to be gathered from the different branches of the vine, which, spreading out to the ends of the earth, and supplied with nutriment from the same prolific stem, are yet all more or less propped on some foreign stay. Some of those boughs hang like creepers from a stiff lattice-work of forms and ceremonies; and then the fruit is dry and penurious. Others cling for support to the austere aisles of conventual asceticism; and then the produce is harsh and unpalatable. Others, again, sink down and sustain themselves on a certain stunted and coarse shrubbery of irreverent, sensuous, and erotic familiarity; and then the vintage becomes watery and luscious. But some abide in the all-sustaining and animating trunk, with the firmest hold and in the closest union, and then the grapes they yield are ponderous and racy, like the clusters of Eshcoll, glowing with the richest bloom, and redolent of the most grateful odours.

The interpretation of the parable is to be found in every page of the five volumes, in which two of the sons of Mr. Wilberforce have recorded the life and

writings of their father. Tried by literary laws alone, they must be condemned as overladen with a mass of superfluous details. But that redundance was indispensable to an effect of a far higher kind than any mere artist ever had in view.

In these annals, or rather in this annual register of Mr. Wilberforce's acts, the unity of design consists in the constant exhibition and prominence of one great truth which it is impossible to express aright, except in the words of an inspired apostle. It is the story of a life 'hidden with Christ in God.' What that hidden life really was in the person of William Wilberforce, none but himself could know, and few indeed could even plausibly conjecture. But even they who are the least able to solve the enigma, may acknowledge and feel that there was some secret spring of action on which his strength was altogether dependent.

It is indeed needless to allege any mystery (except as all things are mysterious) to account for the more obvious phenomena. It was no marvel that a man of great talents rejoiced to exercise and exhibit them in the House of Commons; or that a gentleman of large estate maintained his parliamentary independence; or that a person of extraordinary powers of conversation delighted in a generous hospitality; or that so fortunate a husband, father, brother, and friend, was perfectly amiable in those relations, and kind and temperate, just and true, in his dealings with the outer world. To the eye ranging over the mere surface of society, the master of almost every well-furnished mansion appears like an undistinguishable monad in the vast and decorous company of the obliging and the respectable.

But among the tasks to which frail man is subject,

there is none to which his unaided strength is more unequal, than that of passing many years among these legitimate advantages, without ever being held in bondage by their enervating influence. Horse-hair shirts and a scourge for the rebellious flesh, monastic rule for the haughty spirit, poverty for the proud of purse, and for self-idolaters silence and seclusion! But what is the outward discipline for him who, bidden to travel on the highways of life, can take no step heavenwards, unbeset or unobstructed by wealth, power, admiration, and popularity? How shall faith preserve her dominion over him to whom the world is daily offering whatever can most kindle the imagination, engage the understanding, or gratify ambition?

There is but one such corrective. It is to be found in that unbroken communion with the indwelling God, in which Mr. Wilberforce habitually lived. He 'endured as seeing Him who is invisible,' and as hearing Him who is inaudible. When most immersed in political cares, or in social enjoyments, he invoked and obeyed the voice which directed his path, while it tranquillised his mind. That voice was still at hand to soften his most indignant invectives, and to disarm his parliamentary polemics of all their bitterness. It reduced his most impassioned statements to the severe measure of truth. It chained down to many an irksome study a mind disposed to flutter about every topic, and to fasten upon none. It rendered him most tolerant of honest mediocrity and well-meant dulness, though he was one in whom every spark of genius instantly kindled a sympathetic flash. It made the keenest of critics the most charitable of judges. It confined to well-chosen channels, the stream of bounty which his large heart was

willing to pour profusely into all. It rendered every remotest interest of humanity sacred to him, although he was placed in constant and immediate contact with whatever could most excite his self-love, or his domestic affections. It enabled him to concentrate his benevolence within the narrow precincts of his own house, or of any adjacent cottage, while he was expanding his vision to the ends of the earth, and to remotest posterities. It at once chastised and animated the happy temperament with which he surveyed the ways and the works of men, and tempered without blunting the edge of the playful wit with which he depicted them. It taught him to rejoice, as a child, in the presence of a Father whom he much loved and altogether trusted, and whose approbation was infinitely more than an equivalent for whatever restraint, self-denial, labour, or sacrifice, obedience to His will might render necessary.

And thus were combined and reconciled the most profound sense of the vanity of human pursuits, and the most lively interest in them all. Obeying the precept which Mr. Taylor has given to his 'Statesman,' he observed a sabbatical day in every week, and a sabbatical hour in every day. Those days and hours gave him back to the world, not merely with recruited strength, but in a spirit the most favourable to the right discharge of his worldly duties. Things, in themselves the most trivial, wearisome, or even offensive, had, in his solitude, assumed a solemn interest from their connection with the present or the future happiness of mankind, while the alluring objects of human ambition had been brought into a humiliating contrast with the great ends for which life is given, and with the immortal hopes by which it should be sustained. Nothing can be more heartfelt than the

delight with which he breathed the pure air of these devotional retirements. Nothing more soothing than the tranquillity which they diffused over a spirit harassed with the conflicts and the vexations which track the path of all who labour in the service of the commonwealth.

In such labours Mr. Wilberforce was sometimes preceded or followed, but was always accompanied, by that section of the Church (the word, in our use of it, embraces all Christian people), which has either assumed or acquired the distinctive title of 'Evangelical.' They claimed him as their champion and leader, and not unjustly. And yet the great change of character which he underwent, would be most unfairly represented as a mere passing over to their camp. He was exempt from bondage to that, or to any other religious party. Except in his immutable attachment to the great fundamental doctrines of the Gospel, he was very much a latitudinarian. Though conforming to the ritual of the Church of England, he occasionally attended the public worship of those who dissent from her communion, and maintained a constant and affectionate fellowship with many of them. He travelled the highways of life, and conversed freely with all who thronged them. He knew little of polemical divinity, and seemed to care for it but little. His heart must quickly have overleapt the bounds of any narrow ecclesiastical alliance which he might have contracted. His Catholic spirit, sustained by a ready and capacious faith, was seldom harassed by controversy or overclouded by scepticism. No man ever sought out the meaning of the sacred writers with more conscientious care, and none ever acknowledged their divine authority with a more childlike docility. Finding in his own bosom an echo

to every doctrine and every precept of the Gospel, he wisely and reverently received this evidence of their truth, and instead of consuming life in a protracted and still recurring scrutiny into the basis of his belief, he busied himself in erecting on it a superstructure of piety and active benevolence. Having solemnly consecrated his days to the culture and improvement of his own spiritual nature, and to the advancement of human happiness, he left it to men of a less favoured destiny to debate the government of the churches, or to untwist the finer intricacies of their creeds. 'The reformation of manners, and the abolition of the slave trade,' having been deliberately selected as his appropriate province of public service, he gave up to the faithful discharge of it every energy of his renovated soul, until labour, age, and infirmity dissolved his mortal prison-house, and set him free to partake of a purer and more perfect renovation.

'Seated in the open air, at the root of an old tree, in Holwood, just above the steep descent into the valley of Keston,' Mr. Wilberforce discussed with Mr. Pitt the probabilities of success in a warfare against the slave trade; and rose from that conference with a settled resolution to take the earliest opportunity which might present itself of announcing that design to the House of Commons.

This was no sudden impulse. While yet a schoolboy at Pocklington, he had contributed to a newspaper then published at York, a letter, protesting against 'the odious traffic in human flesh.' That early impression, from whatever source derived, had deepened with increasing age. During the first six years of his parliamentary life, he had instituted many inquiries into the real state of our colonial slavery, and had conceived and avowed the hope that he

should live to redress the wrongs of the African race. He had investigated this gigantic evil, and had debated the arduous remedy with James Ramsay, the first confessor and proto-martyr of this faith, and with Ignatius Latrobe, the first of the missionaries who raised the banner of the Cross against it, and with Sir Charles and Lady Middleton, who had convened, in their mansion in Kent, the first council ever held in this kingdom for the gathering and conduct of this new crusade.

In later days, agitation for the accomplishment of great political objects has taken a place among social arts. But sixty years since, it was among the inventions slumbering in the womb of time, taught by no professors, and illustrated by no examples. We have lived to see many of the most ancient and solid edifices, erected by the wisdom of our ancestors, totter at the blast of leagues, associations, speeches, reports, and editorial articles, like the towers of Jericho falling before the rams' horns of Joshua. But when Mr. Wilberforce and his friends met to deliberate on their enterprise, the contrast between the magnitude of their design and the poverty of their resources, demanded a faith scarcely inferior to that which encouraged the invaders of Palestine to assault with the sound of their trumpets, the towers built up by the children of Anak to the heavens. Truth, indeed, and justice were on their side; and in the flower of his youth, his eloquence, and his fame, Mr. Pitt had given the bright augury of his adhesion to their cause. But, after twenty years of ceaseless controversy had rolled away, the most sanguine of them was constrained to 'stand in awe of the powers of falsehood' and of commercial cupidity, and to acknowledge, that in effecting so great a deliverance,

God would not employ the rulers nor the mere rhetoricians of the world, but would use as His instruments, His own devoted servants—men able to touch in the bosoms of others the sacred springs of action which were working in their own.

Among the foremost in this holy war, the names of Granville Sharpe and Thomas Clarkson are ever to be mentioned with peculiar reverence. To the former was committed the presidency of the society, charged with the duty of collecting and diffusing information respecting the real character of the slave trade. Mr. Clarkson became the zealous and indefatigable agent of that body. To Mr. Wilberforce was assigned the general superintendence of the cause, both in and out of Parliament.

In 1789, he first proposed the abolition of the slave trade to the House of Commons, in a speech which Burke rewarded with one of those imperishable eulogies which he alone had the skill and the authority to pronounce. But a victory over Guinea merchants was not to be numbered amongst the triumphs of eloquence. Unable to withstand the current of popular feeling which the novelty, as much as the nature, of the proposal had stirred, they sagaciously resolved to await the subsidence of this unwonted enthusiasm; soliciting only a suspension of the measure until Parliament should be in possession of the facts which they undertook to substantiate.

To this Fabian policy, ever changing in its aspect, but uniform in its design, the slave traders were indebted for the prolongation of their guilty commerce. Nearly two years were worn away in the examination of their witnesses; and when Mr. Wilberforce had, with difficulty, succeeded in transferring the inquiry from the bar of the House of Commons to the less

dilatory tribunal of a Select Committee; he had still to struggle laboriously for permission to produce testimony in refutation of the evidence of his antagonists. It was not, therefore, till April, 1791, that the question of the abolition of the trade was directly brought to issue; when a proof was given of the foresight with which the Guinea merchants had calculated on the gradual subsidence of the public indignation. Ominous were the forebodings with which the friends of Mr. Wilberforce looked forward to the approaching debate. By the master of St. John's College, Cambridge, his position was compared to that of 'Episcopius in the infamous synod of Dort;' while John Wesley exhorted him to proceed to the conflict as a new 'Athanasius *contra mundum*.' Those divines had well interpreted the temper of the times. The slave traders triumphed by an overwhelming majority. In the political tumults of those days the voice of humanity was no longer audible, and common sense had ceased to discharge its office. The bad faith and fickleness of the French Government had involved St. Domingo in confusion and bloodshed; and because the elements of society had broken loose in that colony, it was judged dangerous to arrest the accumulation of the materials of similar discord within our own! Even Mr. Pitt avowed his opinion that it was wise to await more tranquil times before the slave trade should be abolished. It was in vain that Mr. Wilberforce urged on the House of Commons, in 1792, the true inference from the calamitous state of St. Domingo. His proposals were again defeated. Those were days in which every change was branded as a revolution, and when the most sacred rules of moral or political conduct, if adduced in favour of

any reform, were denounced and abhorred as 'French principles.'

Reason, however, having gradually regained her dominion, the procrastinating system of the slave traders assumed a new shape, and obtained, in the person of Mr. Dundas, its most formidable advocate. With perverse ingenuity, he proposed to substitute a gradual for an immediate abolition; fixing a remote period for the entire cessation of the trade. Yet even in this cautious form the bill found a cold reception in the House of Peers, where, after consuming the session in the examination of two witnesses, their Lordships postponed the measure till the following year. With the arrival of that period, Mr. Wilberforce had to sustain three successive defeats. The House of Commons rejected first, the main proposal of an immediate abolition of the trade; then, a motion restricting the number of slaves to be annually imported into our own colonies; and, finally, a plan for prohibiting the employment of British capital in the introduction of slaves into foreign settlements. His perseverance, however, was not fruitless. A deep impression had been made by his past efforts; and, in 1794, the House of Commons, for the first time, passed a bill of immediate abolition. The defenders of the slave trade were again rescued from the impending blow by the interposition of the Peers; amongst whom a melancholy pre-eminence was thenceforth to be assigned to a member of the Royal House, who lived to redeem his early error, by assenting, in the decline of life, to the introduction of the law for the abolition of slavery.

Thus far the difficulties of the contest had chiefly arisen from the influence or the arts of his enemies; but Mr. Wilberforce had now to sustain the more

depressing weight of the secession of one of his most effective auxiliaries. Suffering under nervous debility and influenced by other motives, of which an explanation is to be found in his 'History of the Abolition of the Slave Trade,' Mr. Clarkson was reluctantly compelled to retire from the field. With what deep regret he abandoned the contest may be learnt from his own volumes; and earnest as must have been his aspiration for its success, he was unable, during the eleven years which followed, to resume his place amidst the champions of the cause, though he lived to witness and to share in the triumph.

Providence had gifted Mr. Wilberforce with greater nervous energy; and though sustaining labours not less severe, and a public responsibility incomparably more anxious than that under which the health of his colleague had given way, he returned to the conflict with unabated resolution. In 1795, and in the following year, he again laboured in vain to induce the House of Commons to resume the ground which they had already taken; nor could his all-believing charity repress the honest indignation with which he records that a body of his supporters, sufficient to have carried the bill, had been enticed from their places in the House, by the new opera of the 'Two Hunchbacks,' in which a conspicuous part was assigned to the great vocalist of that day, Signior Portugallo. A rivalry more formidable even than that of the Haymarket had now arisen. Parodying his father's celebrated maxim, Mr. Pitt was engaged in conquering Europe in the West Indies; and, with the acquisition of new colonies, the slave-trade acquired an increased extent, and its supporters had obtained augmented Parliamentary interest. The result was to subject Mr. Wilberforce, in the debate of 1797, to a defeat

more signal than any of those which he had hitherto endured. His opponents eagerly seized this opportunity to render it irreparable. On the motion of Mr. Charles Ellis, an address to the Crown was carried, which transferred to the legislative bodies of the different colonies the task of preparing for the very measure which they had leagued together to frustrate. It was with extreme difficulty, and not without the most strenuous remonstrances, that Mr. Wilberforce dissuaded Mr. Pitt from lending his support to this extravagant project. To increase the value of his Transatlantic conquests, he had thrown open the intercourse between our colonies and those of Spain, and had offered, in the newly acquired islands, fresh lands, on which the slave traders might effect further settlements; and though, by ceaseless importunity, Mr. Wilberforce obtained the revocation of the first of these measures, and the suspension of the second, yet the cupidity of the slave traders, and their influence in the national councils were largely increased by these new prospects of gain. Their augmented powers were attested by the ill success which attended Mr. Wilberforce's annual motions in 1798 and 1799.

The contest had now endured for twelve years. Ten successive efforts had been fruitlessly made to obtain the concurrence of the Legislature in arresting this gigantic evil. Hopeless of success by perseverance in the same tactics, and yet incapable of retiring from the duty he had assumed, Mr. Wilberforce now addressed himself to the project of effecting, by a compromise, the end which seemed unattainable by direct and open hostilities. The year 1800 was accordingly consumed in negotiations with the chief West India proprietors, of which the object was to

win their concurrence in limiting the duration of the trade to a period of five or at most seven years. Delusive hopes of success cheered him for a while, but it was ere long apparent that the phalanx of his enemies was too firm to be penetrated. The peace of Amiens had brought to the Court of London a minister from the French Republic, who encouraged the hope that it might be possible to arrange a general convention of all the European powers for the abandonment of the traffic. Long and anxious were the endeavours made by Mr. Wilberforce for maturing this project. It is needless to say that they were unavailing. The season of 1801 was about to close, and the end in view appeared more distant than at any former time.

Mr. Addington seems to have regarded the great expedition to St. Domingo as a kind of sedative, which would paralyse the resistance of the oppressed negroes throughout the West Indies; and feared to check the operation of this anodyne. The charm which these medical analogies exercised over the then occupant of the Treasury bench did not, however, extend its influence to Mr. Wilberforce. He announced his purpose to resume the Parliamentary contest in the year 1802, when the attempt was accordingly made, though under the most discouraging circumstances. The wit and eloquence of Mr. Canning, remonstrating against the settlement of new lands in Trinidad, had been repelled by the passive resistance of the then Minister, and the time occupied in this discussion had delayed, until the dissolution of Parliament rendered impossible, the further progress of the Abolition Act. The tumult of war in the succeeding year silenced every other sound; and the advocate of the slaves was condemned to a reluctant

silence, whilst every voice was raised in reprobation of Bonaparte, and in resentment for the insult offered to Lord Whitworth.

At length the auguries of success became distinct and frequent. Mr. Pitt had returned to office, the dread of Jacobinism no longer haunted the public mind, but, above all, the proprietors in the Caribbean Islands had made the discovery, that, by encouraging the slave trade, they were creating in the planters of the conquered colonies the most dangerous rivals in their monopoly of the British market. The union with Ireland had added a new host of friends. Not a single representative from that country withheld his assistance. Amidst all these encouragements, Mr. Wilberforce again appealed to the House of Commons, and carried the bill with overwhelming majorities. Cordial were now the congratulations of his friends of every class, from the aged John Newton of St. Mary Woolnoth, to Jeremy Bentham, whose celebrity as the most original thinker of his age was then in its early dawn. But the Peers had not yet yielded to the influence of Christian or Moral Philosophy. 'The debate,' says Mr. Wilberforce's Diary, 'was opened by the Chancellor in a very threatening speech, because over-rating property, and full of all moral blunders. He showed himself to labour with feelings as if he was the legitimate guardian of property — Lord Stanhope's a wild speech — Lord Hawkesbury spoke honourably and handsomely — Westmoreland like himself, coarse and bullying, but not without talent. Grenville spoke like a man of high and honourable principles, who, like a truly great statesman, regarded right and politic as identical.' Blunders and bullying, however, prevailed;

and the question was adjourned to the following session.

Before its arrival Lord Brougham, then travelling on the Continent as an American, and even 'venturing to pass a week in the same house with several French Generals,' had offered Mr. Wilberforce his assistance in pursuing various collateral inquiries throughout Holland and Germany, and in 'the great scenes of bondage (as it is called) Poland, Russia, and Hungary.' To this most potent ally many others were added. Mr. Stephen and Mr. Macaulay were unremitting in the use of the pen and the press. The classical knowledge of Mr. Robert Grant was put under contribution, to illustrate the state of slavery in the ancient world; and even the daughters of Lord Muncaster were enlisted in the service of methodising the contents of all African travels, ancient and modern. High and sanguine as were the hopes of Mr. Wilberforce, he had yet another disappointment to sustain. The House of Commons of 1805, receding from their former resolutions, rejected his bill, and drew from him in his private journals, language of distress and pain such as no former defeat had been able to extort.

The death of Mr. Pitt approached; an event which the most calm and impartial judgment must now regard as the necessary precursor of the liberation of Africa. For seventeen years, since the commencement of the contest, he had guided the counsels of this country. Successful in almost every other Parliamentary conflict, and triumphing over the most formidable antagonists, he had been compelled, by the Dundases and Jenkinsons, and Roses, who on every other subject quailed under his eye, to go to the grave without obliterating that which he himself had denounced as the deepest stain on our national

character, and the most enormous guilt recorded in the history of mankind. During that long period, millions of innocent victims had perished. Had he perilled his political existence on the issue, no rational man can doubt that an amount of guilt, of misery, of disgrace, and of loss, would have been spared to England and to the civilised world, such as no other man ever had it in his power to arrest.

The political antagonists of Mr. Pitt were men of a different temper; and although in the Cabinet of Mr. Fox there were not wanting those who opposed him on this subject, yet it was an opposition which, in the full tide of success, he could afford to disregard and to pardon. Had it endangered for a single session the abolition of the slave trade, these names, eminent as one at least of them was, would infallibly have been erased from the list of his Administration. Mr. Fox's Ministry had scarcely taken their places when Lord Grenville introduced into the House of Lords, and speedily carried, two bills, of which the first abolished the slave trade with all foreign powers, and the second forbade the employment in that traffic of any British shipping which had not already been engaged in it; whilst the House of Commons resolved that the slave trade was 'contrary to the principles of justice, humanity, and sound policy; and that they would proceed to abolish it with all practicable expedition.' Faithfully was this pledge redeemed. The death of Mr. Fox did not even delay its fulfilment. Early in 1807 that great statesman, to whom at the distance of twenty-six years it was reserved to propose the abolition of slavery itself, introduced into the House of Commons a bill which placed on the British statute-book the final condemnation of the trade in slaves. Amidst the acclamations of Parlia-

ment, the enthusiastic congratulation of his friends, and the applauses of the world, Mr. Wilberforce witnessed the success of the great object of his life with emotions, and in a spirit, which could not have found admission into a mind less pure and elevated than his own. The friendly shouts of victory which arose on every side were scarcely observed or heeded in the delightful consciousness of having rendered to mankind a service of unequalled magnitude. He retired to prostrate himself before the Giver of all good things, in profound humility and thankfulness, — wondering at the unmerited bounty of God, who had carried him through twenty years of unremitting labour, and bestowed on him a name of imperishable glory.

There are those who have disputed his title to the station thus assigned to him. Amongst the most recent is to be numbered one whose esteem is of infinitely too high value to be lightly disregarded, and whose judgment will carry with it no common authority. Mr. Serjeant Talfourd, in his 'Life of Charles Lamb,' referring to an interview which took place between Lamb and Mr. Clarkson, uses the following expressions: — 'There he also met with the true annihilator of the slave trade, Thomas Clarkson, who was then enjoying a necessary respite from his stupendous labours in a cottage on the borders of Ulswater. Lamb had no taste for oratorical philanthropy, but he felt the grandeur and simplicity of Clarkson's character.'

The contrast which is thus drawn between 'the true annihilator' of the slave trade, and the oratorical philanthropist who declaimed against it, might provoke and justify a retaliation, from which we judge it wise, because charitable, to abstain. Let it

rather be acknowledged that Mr. Talfourd's disrelish for oratorical philanthropy is a reasonable and honest aversion. But neither let it be concealed that the 'philanthropy of agitation' is not generally entitled to much higher esteem. It is for the common good that the merit of all such services should be brought down from the illuminated pinnacles of hyperbole, to the level of unadorned truth.

We claim no place for Mr. Wilberforce among the heroes of benevolence on the ground of his parliamentary labours in the cause of Africa. Why not frankly admit, what every body knows, that the conduct of any great cause in the House of Commons is contended for by the members of it with eager rivalry, and that the celebrity and the influence which wait on the successful competitor, are such as might vanquish any common amount of apathy or of idleness. A gentleman of fortune may give himself up to labour during half his life in that assembly to emancipate a continent, or to repeal a corn law, without making one formidable enemy, or losing a single friend, or missing one night's rest, or foregoing a solitary dinner.

Neither is the noble army of martyrs recruited from that busy class, who, taking for their point of departure some central committee in London, and for their periphery the circuit of our provincial cities, and for their conveyance our commodious public vehicles, and for their solace much local hospitality, and for their support a reasonable salary, are thus enabled to earn the applauses of crowds, and the eulogies of poets.

The fact is, and we may all as well avow it, that the moral sublime does not belong to our age and country. The labours which the learned Serjeant

admires as 'stupendous,' were probably far less 'stupendous' during each of the eight or nine years of their continuance, than those of his biographer in his chambers or on his Oxford circuit. 'The true annihilator of the slave trade' had, during the eleven last and most irksome years of the contest, just as much, and just as little, to do with it as Mr. Talfourd himself.

But woe be to them whose joy is in the invasion of great names, and in the overthrow of great reputations! William Wilberforce was one of the legitimate heirs of immortality, although his path is in appearance the same with that which has since been trodden by our Daniel O'Connells and our Richard Cobdens. Thomas Clarkson is a name to be for ever loved and honoured, despite the vulgar herd who have imitated and rivalled his course of public service. The just and genuine praise of both is the same. Their exertions for the abolition of the slave trade were but in each as a single strain in concord with that love to God and love to man which, in the heart of each, rose in one unbroken harmony, from early youth to extreme old age. Their common title to enduring fame is, that in a gracious acknowledgment and reward of those holy offices, God himself assigned to them, not the most arduous, and certainly not the most self-denying, but the foremost places in that enterprise —an enterprise, the memory of which could be preserved to the remotest times only by being impersonated in some illustrious names, and therefore associated with theirs, not by any human caprice or fortuitous accident, but by the selection and appointment of the Master they served. And therefore will William Wilberforce be remembered with affectionate reverence as long as the history and

the language of England shall endure, maugre such sarcasm as that which we have quoted; and Thomas Clarkson will be honoured by our latest posterity, in defiance of the extravagance of his eulogists, and though degraded by the citizens of London in their Guildhall to the level of Beckford, the insolent poltroon who stands beside him there.

It was not in the nature of Mr. Wilberforce to concentrate all his thoughts on this, or on any other single design, however magnificent. He could not be a passive spectator of any undertaking, which had the welfare of mankind for its object. 'God has set before me the reformation of my country's manners,' was one part of the solemn self-dedication of his twenty-seventh year, and he descended to the grave with the unalterable conviction, that such was the will of God concerning him.

The forty-seven years which intervened between those epochs, embrace the most momentous era of modern history. Within that period, greater changes occurred in the internal economy of Great Britain, than had been witnessed in any two preceding centuries. Agriculture, commerce, manufactures, revenue, and population expanded with an unexampled elasticity. Never before had the material world been made to pay so large a tribute to the material wants of mankind. Under the half magical power of the steam-engine, works which would have baffled the muscular strength of all the inhabitants of the globe united, were performed in a narrow district of this narrow island, with an ease, a precision, and a rapidity, emulating some of the mighty operations of nature. Wealth, such as avarice had scarcely pictured in her dreams, was accumulated in those centres of mechanical industry, and the higher

class of English society, commercial as well as noble, revelled in a sumptuousness of living, for which a description or an example could be found nowhere but in the fabulous East.

Mr. Wilberforce was hardly a far-sighted philosopher; yet behind this brilliant spectacle, his prescience saw the lowering of that storm, the approach of which is now confessed by the forebodings of every thoughtful man in Europe. His meditations and his discourse continually pointed to the still widening gulph between the two extremes of English society. He mourned over the coming conflict between vice, ignorance, poverty, and discontent on the one side, and selfishness, sensuality, hardness of heart, and corruption on the other — between our loathsome cellars and our luxuriant palaces. But it was not in his nature to abandon himself to that or to any other ineffectual grief.

To stay the advance of the plague, he addressed himself to the promotion of every scheme which ingenuity, his own or others, could devise for the religious, and intellectual, and social improvement, either of the rich or of the poor. While Watt and Arkwright were astounding the world with the miracles which mechanical art can produce by the aid of commercial capital, Mr. Wilberforce was aiding Bell and Lancaster, under the conduct of all the churches, conforming or nonconforming, to develope the prodigies of mutual instruction. Factories did not spring up more rapidly in Leeds and Manchester, than schemes of benevolence beneath his roof; and though many years have passed since the throng which daily gathered there has been dispersed, it is still impossible to revive the remembrance of those strange assemblages, without a smile

which will check for a moment the more serious feelings with which they are associated.

In the study might be seen the projector of the Bible Society, who, in virtue of his privilege of the *entrée*, was seated near the table, upon and beneath which stood piles of subscription lists, plans, and reports from countless kindred associations. Eloquent deputies from Hibernian schools were, meanwhile, restlessly expecting their audience in the drawing-room. In the anti-chamber, the advocates for an improved prison discipline were themselves undergoing a sort of temporary imprisonment. But it was in the spacious library that philanthropic speculation rose to its highest tide. There were ladies anxious to explain their plans of visiting the sick, Quakers under a concern for transported convicts, the founders of savings banks, missionaries from Serampore and the Red River, and, every where conspicuous amidst the crowd, the ever busy and well-satisfied countenance of his excellent friend 'Mendicity Martin,' so called from his presiding over the whole department of mendicancy in this great eleemosynary government. And then would emerge from his closet Mr. Wilberforce, the prime minister of that disjointed state, passing from one group to another, not without a smile, which revealed to the initiated his involuntary perception of the comic aspect of the scene, but still more clearly disclosing by his voice, his gestures, and his kindling eye, the generous resentment, the glowing admiration, or the tender sympathy with which he listened to one and another tale of injustice, of self-denial, or of woe, until, gradually, the whole levy had withdrawn, not merely forgiving their host the waste of the morning, but more devoted than ever to a leader, whose exquisite courtesy would have atoned for any

thing, even if his mature wisdom, his almost feminine tenderness, and his childlike gaiety, had not swept away every less delightful remembrance.

There are those who can smile with him at the grotesque appearance occasionally assumed by the vast machinery established amongst us for the propagation of Christian knowledge and for the relief of human wretchedness, but who never glow, as he did, with faith in the principle, hope of the success, or love for the agents, of that great voluntary system. And yet, there is no other direction in which it is easy to regard the future destinies of England with complacency, or even with composure. Amidst the sins and the miseries of our land, it is no light solace to remember, that in every city and village, and in almost every private family in the enjoyment of competency, some steady effort is made to diffuse the light of the Gospel and to increase the sum of temporal comforts amongst all over whom the dominion of Great Britain extends, or to whom her influence reaches. But the aged remember when, as yet, these things were not, and were not anticipated.

Of the schemes of public benevolence which were matured or projected during the half century which followed the peace of 1783, there was scarcely one of any magnitude in which Mr. Wilberforce was not largely engaged. Whether churches and clergymen were to be multiplied, or the Scriptures circulated, or missions sent to the ends of the earth, or national education established, or the condition of the poor improved, or Ireland civilised, or good discipline established in gaols, or obscure genius and piety enabled to emerge, or in whatever other form philanthropy and patriotism laboured for the improvement of his country, or of the world, — his sanc-

tion, his eloquence, and his advice, were still regarded as indispensable to success. No one man, however, nor any one hundred men, could have assumed the actual superintendence of all the complicated affairs in which he was thus immersed. To have conducted, or understood, or even to have remembered them all, would have been to live in the habitual performance of a miracle. His real position was that of a minister of public charity, holding his office by popular acclamation, and delegating the more toilsome details of that laborious administration to the friends and the partisans who rejoiced to co-operate with him. He maintained his authority over them by their affectionate reverence, by his own unfailing bounty, and by the spell which he exercised over every one whom he employed and trusted. No department in the state was ever so zealously served, or so well administered. Yet it is impossible to exhibit in any connected narrative the series and succession of these labours, which have no other connection or mutual dependency than that which they derive from the identity of the agent, and from the unity of his general design. The biographers of Mr. Wilberforce have had no romantic tale to tell, nor have they been required to exhibit human virtue on any gigantic or inimitable scale. In promoting his schemes of beneficence, Mr. Wilberforce moved with the graceful freedom which seemed to exclude every notion of effort or of self-denial. Even in his most irksome works of mercy, the refined ease of a gentleman attended him, for to be turgid or ostentatious, was as impossible to him as to be unfeeling. He would render the lowliest offices of personal kindness to his domestic servants, or to any neighbouring cottager, with the same flowing courtesy with which he inter-

changed the amenities of society among his equals. During many years of his life, he devoted to acts of munificence from a fourth to a third part of his annual income, and the money so freely given was ever accompanied by some greeting, so kindly or so gay, as to soothe every painful sense of obligation.

It must be confessed, however, that the joyful promptitude with which he rendered every other service of love, forsook him when the press was to be the instrument of his philanthropy. To build up a literary edifice, in which chapter was to rise upon chapter, in architectural proportion, was a task which suited him as ill as the labours of the collier would agree with the taste of an aeronaut. Yet the year 1797 witnessed the completion of an 8vo. volume from his pen, bearing on its front the title of 'A Practical View of the prevailing Religious System of Professed Christians in the Higher and Middle Classes of this Country contrasted with real Christianity.'

Tradition informs us, that this book was written under the roof of two of the dearest and wisest of his friends, who had resort to many affectionate artifices to promote this unusual concentration of his discursive thoughts. Sometimes, when passages of peculiar energy burst, in all their native warmth from his lips, the lady of the house would seize the happy moment and become herself his amanuensis. Sometimes she would gather up the scattered leaves with which her guest had enriched her drawing-room, or her conservatory, and when the hour seemed propitious to composition, would purposely leave him in an undisturbed and welcome solitude. The story (pleasantly exaggerated perhaps) concludes with the statement, that when, at length, she saw the volume complete upon her table, she declared herself

a convert to the opinion, that a fortuitous concourse of atoms might, by some felicitous chance, combine themselves into the most perfect of forms, — a moss-rose, or a bird of paradise.

Such a treatise, by so conspicuous a member of the House of Commons, could not but excite a lively interest at the time of its appearance. But if there be sincerity in this world, it is in the selection of the books we purchase, and neither rank nor any other accident, in the circumstances of any author, ever yet produced the sale of fifty editions of so large a work within the same number of years. It was little marvellous that ecclesiastics of every rank and section greeted with the loudest applause the advent of an ally at once so powerful and so unexpected. But that can have been no common production, which compelled the author of 'The Pursuits of Literature' to throw aside his stilts, and to pour out a heartfelt tribute of praise in his unpolluted mother tongue. Still less is it possible to question the inherent life and energy of an appeal, which drew from Edmund Burke his grateful acknowledgments for the solace shed by it over the last two days of his eventful life.

Yet they who shall search this book for deep theology, or profound investigation, will be disappointed. 'Philosophy,' says Abraham Tucker, 'may be styled the art of marshalling the ideas in the understanding, and religion that of disciplining the imagination.' In the first of these arts Mr. Wilberforce did not excel; in the second he has scarcely ever been surpassed. The first three chapters of his work are evidently inferior to the rest. He is there upon a debateable land, contrasting the inspired text with the prevalent opinions of his age on some points of Christian doctrine. The accuracy of his own interpretations, or

rather of those which are received by that part of the Church of England usually designated as Evangelical, being assumed throughout these discussions, they will scarcely convince such as read the New Testament in a different sense. But when he emerges from these defiles, and enters upon broader ground, comparing the precepts of revelation with the conventional morality of the world's favoured children, he speaks (for it is throughout a spoken rather than a written language) with a persuasive energy which breathes the very spirit of the inspired volume.

Here all is the mature result of profound meditation; and his thoughts, if not always methodical and compact, are at least always poured out in words so earnest and affectionate, that philanthropy never yet assumed a more appropriate, or a more eloquent style. It is the expostulation of a brother. Unwelcome truth is delivered with scrupulous fidelity, and yet with a tenderness which demonstrates that the monitor feels the pain which he reluctantly inflicts. It is this tone of human sympathy breathing in every page which constitutes the essential charm of this book; and it is to the honour of our common nature that we are all disposed to love best that teacher, who, with the deepest compassion for our sorrows, has the least indulgence for the errors or the faults by which they have been occasioned.

Whatever objections may have been raised to Mr. Wilberforce's theological opinions, there is but one which can be stated to the exegetical part of his treatise. It is, that he has erected a standard too pure and too sublime for this world's use, and proposes a scheme of Utopian perfection which is calculated, by discouraging hope, to repress exertion. The obvious answer is, that the design of every rule which can be

given for the conduct of life is to afford an accurate measure of our deflection from the path of duty, and a trustworthy guide for our return. Any system of religion or ethics which tolerated the slightest compromise with moral evil, would be so far subversive of its own purpose; although it is from the general prevalence of moral evil that such systems derive their existence and their value. To mark distinctly the departure of the luxurious, busy, care-worn, and ambitious age to which he belonged, from the theory and the practice of Christian morality, was the task which Mr. Wilberforce proposed to himself. Never were the sensuality, the gloom, and the selfishness which fester below the polished surface of society, brought into more vivid contrast with the faith, and hope, and charity, which in their combination form the Christian character; and never was that contrast drawn with a firmer hand, with a more tender spirit, or with a purer aspiration for the happiness of mankind.

To all these labours for the benefit of the world, were added others, addressed, though less directly, to the same end, and undertaken and pursued in a similar spirit. In his political career, Mr. Wilberforce never ceased to act and to speak as one to whom Providence had confided the sacred trust of advancing the moral character, and promoting the welfare of his age and nation.

As a public speaker, he enjoyed great and well-merited celebrity. But it was not in the House of Commons that his powers in this kind were exhibited to the greatest advantage. In all the deliberations of Parliament may be discerned a tacit reference to the Royal citation which has brought together the two Houses 'for the despatch of divers weighty and

urgent affairs.' The knights and burgesses are emphatically men of business, and have but little indulgence for any thing which tasks the understanding, addresses itself to the heart, or elevates the imagination; — least of all for an ostentatious display of the resources of the speaker's mind. He who can contribute a pertinent fact, or a weighty argument, may safely repose in the region of the bathos. The aspirant for fame must excel in perspicuity of statement, in promptitude in the exposure or invention of sophistry, and in a ready though abstemious use of wit, ridicule, and sarcasm.

In these requisites for success Mr. Wilberforce was deficient. He had not much Statistical knowledge, nor was he familiar with any branch of Political Economy. His argumentation was not usually perspicuous, and was seldom energetic. The habit of digression, the parenthetical structure of his periods, and the minute qualifications suggested by his reverence for truth, impeded the flow of his discourse, and frequently obscured its design. His exquisite perception of the ridiculous kept him in the exercise of habitual self-denial, and the satire which played upon his countenance was suppressed by his universal charity, before it could form itself into language. With these disadvantages he was still a great Parliamentary speaker; and there were occasions when, borne by some sudden impulse, or carried by diligent preparation, over the diffuseness which usually encumbered him, he delighted and subdued his hearers.

His reputation in the House of Commons, rested, however, chiefly upon other grounds. In that assembly, any one speaks with immense advantage whose character, station, or presumed knowledge is such as to give importance to his opinions. The

dogmas of some men are of incomparably more value there than the logic of others; and no member, except the leaders of the great contending parties, addressed the House with an authority equal to that of Mr. Wilberforce. The homage rendered to his personal character, his command over a small but compact party, his representation of the county of York, the confidence of the great religious bodies in every part of England, and, above all, his independent neutrality, gave to his suffrage an almost unexampled value. It was usually delivered with a demeanour of conscious dignity, unalloyed by the slightest tinge of arrogance, and contrasting oddly enough with the insignificance of his slight and shapeless person. Yet the spell he exercised was partly drawn from still another source. Parliamentary eloquence is essentially colloquial; and, when most embellished or sustained, is rather prolonged discourse than oratory properly so called. It was by a constant, perhaps an unavoidable observance of this tone, that Mr. Wilberforce exercised the charm which none could resist, but which many were unable to explain. His speeches in the House of Commons bore the closest resemblance to his familiar conversation. There was the same earnest sincerity of manner, the same natural and varied cadences, the same animation and ease, and the same tone of polished society; and while his affectionate, lively, and graceful talk flowed on without the slightest appearance of effort or study, criticism itself scarcely perceived, or at least excused, the redundancy of his language.

But, as we have said, it was not in Parliament that his powers as a public speaker had their highest exercise. His habitual trains of thought, and the feelings which he most deeply cherished, could rarely

find utterance in that scene of strife and turmoil. At the hustings, where the occasion justified the use of a more didactic style, there was much simple majesty in the uncompromising avowal of his principles, and in the admonitions suggested by them. He there applied the grave eloquence of the pulpit to secular uses. But it was in the great assemblages held for religious and charitable objects that the current of his eloquence moved with the greatest impetus and volume. In them he at once felt his way to the hearts of his eager and delighted listeners. In the fulness of the charity which believeth all things, giving credit to the multitude for feelings as pure and benevolent as his own, he possessed the power of gracefully and decorously laying aside the reserve which habitually shrouded from the irreverent and profane the more secret and cherished feelings of his heart. Nothing was ever more singular, or less framed upon any previous model of eloquence, than were some of those addresses in which the chastened style of the House of Commons (of all assemblies the most fastidious) was employed to give utterance to thoughts which, though best becoming the deepest retirement, retained, even in these crowded scenes, their delicacy not less than their beauty. The most ardent of his expressions bore the impress of indubitable sincerity, and of calm and sober conviction; and were instantly distinguished by the instinct of his hearers from the less genuine enthusiasm of others who dissolved their meaning in ecstasy, and soared beyond the reach of human comprehension into the third heavens of artificial rapture. It was an example perhaps as full of danger as of interest. Not a few are the offensive imitations which have been attempted of a model which could be followed suc-

cessfully, or even innocently, by none whose bosoms did not really burn with the same heavenly affections, who did not practise the same severe observance of truth, or whose taste had not been refined to the same degree of sensibility.

No part of Mr. Wilberforce's biography will be read with greater interest than that which describes his political career. Holding for forty-three years a conspicuous place in the House of Commons, the current of public affairs, as it flowed past him, reflected his character in a thousand different forms; and exhibited, on the most tumultuous theatre of action, the influence of those sacred principles, with the workings of which we are for the most part conversant only in more quiet and secluded scenes.

'From any one truth all truth may be inferred,'—a Baconian text, from which certain commentators of the last century concluded, that he who possessed a Bible might dispense with Grotius and with Locke; and that all other writings should disappear at the approach of the Scriptures, as they had once vanished at the presence of the Koran. The opinion which precisely reverses this doctrine is recommended by less ingenuity, and by no better logic. Mr. Wilberforce was far too wise a man to imagine that any revelation from God could be designed to supersede the duty of patient research into all other sources of knowledge. But neither did he ever reject the vast body of ethical precepts delivered by Divine inspiration, as irrelevant to the political questions with which he was daily conversant. He invariably brought every conclusion drawn from other studies to the test of their consistency with the sacred oracles. They supplied him with an ordinate by which to measure every curve. They gave him what most public men

egregiously want, — the firm hold of a body of unchanging opinions. In his case this advantage was peculiarly momentous. His neglected education, his inaptitude for severe and continuous mental labour, the strength of his sympathies, and his strong personal attachment to Mr. Pitt, all seemed to give the promise of a ductile, vacillating, uncertain course. Yet in reality no man ever pursued in Parliament a career more entirely guided by fixed principles, or more frequently at variance with his habitual inclinations. His connexions, both public and private, not less than his natural temper, disposed him to that line of policy which, in our days, assumes the title of 'conservative;' yet his conduct was almost invariably such as is now distinguished by the epithets 'liberal and reforming.' A Tory by predilection, he was in action a Whig. His heart was with Mr. Pitt; but on all the cardinal questions of the times, his vote was given to Mr. Fox.

This conflict of sentiment with principle did not, however, commence in the earlier days of Mr. Pitt's administration; for the mortal foe of Jacobinism entered the House of Commons as a Parliamentary reformer; and Mr. Wilberforce executed a rapid journey from Nice to London in the winter of 1784 to support, by his eloquence and his vote, the Reform Bill which his friend introduced in the session of that year. The following broken sentences from his diary record the result:—'At Pitt's all day—it goes on well—sat up late chatting with Pitt—his hopes of the country and noble patriotic heart—to town—Pitt's—House—Parliamentary reform—terribly disappointed and beat—extremely fatigued—spoke extremely ill but commended—called at Pitt's—met poor Wyvil.'

Of this 'ill spoken' but 'commended speech,' the following sentence is preserved:—'The consequence of this measure,' he said, 'will be that the freedom of opinion will be restored, and party connexions in great measure vanish, for party on one side begets party on the other;'—a prophecy which, rightly understood, is perceptibly advancing towards its fulfilment.

The ill success of Mr. Pitt's proposal did not damp the zeal of Mr. Wilberforce. He introduced into the House of Commons, and even succeeded in carrying there, two of the most important enactments of the Reform Bill, in which, at the distance of nearly half a century, Lord Grey obtained the reluctant concurrence of the Peers. One of these measures provided for a general registration of voters; the others for holding the poll, at the same time, in several different parts of the same county.

From the commencement of the war with France is to be dated the dissolution of the political alliance which had, till then, been maintained with little interruption between Mr. Wilberforce and Mr. Pitt. Though partaking more deeply than most men of the prevalent abhorrence of the revolutionary doctrines of that day, Mr. Wilberforce's resistance to the war was decided and persevering. A written message from Mr. Pitt, delivered on the first debate on that question, 'assuring him that his speaking then might do irreparable mischief, and promising that he should have another opportunity before war should be declared,' defeated his purpose of protesting publicly against the approaching hostilities. Accident prevented the redemption of Mr. Pitt's pledge, but Mr. Wilberforce's purposes remained unshaken. 'Our Government,' he says, in a letter on this subject, 'had

been for some months before the breaking out of the war negotiating with the principal European powers, for the purpose of obtaining a joint representation to France, assuring her that if she would formally engage to keep within her limits, and not molest her neighbours, she should be suffered to settle her own internal government and constitution without interference. I never was so earnest with Mr. Pitt on any other occasion as I was in my entreaties before the war broke out, that he would openly declare in the House of Commons that he had been, and then was negotiating this treaty. I urged on him that the declaration might possibly produce an immediate effect in France, where it was manifest there prevailed an opinion that we were meditating some interference with their internal affairs, and the restoration of Louis to his throne. At all events, I hoped that in the first lucid interval, France would see how little reason there was for continuing the war with Great Britain; and, at least, the declaration must silence all but the most determined oppositionists in this country. How far this expectation would have been realised you may estimate by Mr. Fox's language when Mr. Pitt, at my instance, did make the declaration last winter (1799). "If," he said, "the Right Honourable Gentleman had made the declaration now delivered, to France, as well as to Russia, Austria, and Prussia, I should have nothing more to say or to desire."'

Experience and reflection confirmed these original impressions. After the war had continued for a year, 'Mr. Wilberforce was engaged in making up his mind cautiously and maturely, and, therefore, slowly as to the best conduct to be observed by Great Britain in the present critical emergency.' With what a severe

self-examination he was accustomed to conduct these inquiries, may be learnt from an entry made at that period in his private journal. 'It is a proof to me of my secret ambition, that though I foresee how much I shall suffer in my feelings throughout from differing from Pitt, and how indifferent a figure I shall most likely make, yet that motives of ambition will insinuate themselves. Give me, O Lord, a true sense of the comparative value of earthly and of heavenly things; this will render me sober-minded, and fix my affections on things above.'

Such was the solemn preparation with which he approached this momentous question, and moved in the session of 1794 an amendment to the address, recommending a more pacific policy. The failure of that attempt did not shake his purpose; for after the interval of a few days he voted with Mr. Grey on a direct motion for the re-establishment of peace. The genuine self-denial with which this submission to a clear sense of duty was attended, Mr. Wilberforce has thus touchingly described. 'No one who has not seen a good deal of public life, and felt how difficult and painful it is to differ widely from those with whom you wish to agree, can judge at what an expense of feeling such duties are performed. Wednesday, February 4, dined at Lord Camden's. Pepper, and Lady Arden, Steele, &c. I felt queer, and all day out of spirits — wrong! but hurt by the idea of Pitt's alienation — 12th, party of *the old firm* at the Speaker's; I not there.'

Mr. Pitt's alienation was not the only, nor the most severe penalty which Mr. Wilberforce had to pay on this occasion. The sarcasms of Windham, — the ironical compliments of Burke, — a cold recep-

tion from the King, — and even Fox's congratulation upon his approaching alliance with the Opposition, might have been endured. But it was more hard to bear the rebukes, however tenderly conveyed, of his friend and early guide, the Dean of Carlisle; the reproaches of the whole body of his clerical allies for the countenance which they conceived him to have given to the enemies of religion and of order; and the earnest remonstrances of many of his most powerful supporters in Yorkshire. The temper so accessible to all kindly influences was, however, sustained by the invigorating voice of an approving conscience. He resumed his pacific proposals in the spring of 1795, and though still defeated, it was by a decreasing majority. Before the close of that year, Mr. Pitt himself had become a convert to the opinions of his friend. The war had ceased to be popular, and Lord Malmesbury's negotiation followed. The failure of that attempt at length convinced Mr. Wilberforce that the war was inevitable; and thenceforward his opposition to it ceased. Yet, on the renewal of hostilities in 1803, he joined Mr. Fox in opposing the ministry, not merely with his vote, but with a speech, which he subsequently published.

The impeachment of Lord Melville brought Mr. Wilberforce into a direct and painful hostility to those with whom he had lived in youthful intimacy, and who still retained their hold on his heart. Mr. Pitt was still his chosen friend; Lord Melville had been his early companion. But though compelled to watch the movements of the 'fascinating eye' and 'the agitated countenance' turned reproachfully to him from the Treasury Bench, he delivered, on this occasion, one of the most memorable of his Parliamentary speeches, — in which the sternest principles of public

morality were so touchingly combined with compassion for the errors he condemned, that the effect was irresistible; and the casting vote of the Speaker can scarcely be said with greater truth to have determined the decision of the House. Nothing more truly in the spirit of the pure and lofty principles by which he was guided, is recorded of him, than his defence to the charge of inconsistency for declining to join the deputation which carried up to the King the subsequent address for the removal of Lord Melville from the Royal Councils. 'I am a little surprised,' he said, 'that it should be imputed as a fault to any that they did not accompany the procession to St. James's. I should have thought that men's own feelings might have suggested to them that it was a case in which the heart might be permitted to give a lesson to the judgment. My country might justly demand that, in my decision on Lord Melville's conduct, I should be governed by the rules of justice, and the principles of the constitution, without suffering party considerations, personal friendship, or any extrinsic motive whatever to interfere; that, in all that was substantial, I should deem myself as in the exercise of a judicial office. But when the sentence of the law is past, is not that sufficient? Am I to join in the execution of it? Is it to be expected of me that I am to stifle the natural feelings of the heart, and not even to shed a tear over the very sentence I am pronouncing? I know not what Spartan virtue or stoical pride might require; but I know that I am taught a different, ay, and a better lesson by a greater than either Lycurgus or Zeno. Christianity enforces no such sacrifice. She requires us indeed to do justice, but to love mercy. I learn in her school not to triumph even over a conquered

enemy, and must I join the triumph over a fallen friend ?'

Although the Historian of the reign of George III. will probably notice Mr. Wilberforce chiefly or exclusively as the author of two great Parliamentary measures, the Annalist of the same times will assign to him a place in almost every memorable debate of the House of Commons, during the last forty years of that reign, and during the first five years of the reign which followed it. But these occurrences, so numerous and so disconnected, will hardly be manageable as a whole, or capable of exhibition as so many sequences, even in the hands of a Biographer, unless he shall treat every incident which he shall glean from the debates and journals of the House, as so many indications of the same unvarying convictions, or as examples of a lawgiver continually acting in the spirit of a judge — seeking no guide but truth — refusing implicit obedience to the voice of any commander — derided by the whole body of partisans as irresolute, fluctuating, and unstable, — and yet being almost the only member of the Legislature whose conscience was perfectly clear of that reproach. From the commencement to the close of his public service, he, and perhaps he alone, shaped his course with an eye continually fixed on what he believed to be the real welfare of his country, with which no personal and no party interest was ever permitted to interfere.

Thus, in the tranquillity of the years 1785 and 1786, during the alarms of 1809, and amidst the disaffection of 1822, Mr. Wilberforce was alike a Parliamentary Reformer, and always with equal decision. For at all times, and under each new aspect of affairs, he acknowledged the duty of wrestling, at whatever

hazard, with the great moral evils inseparable from the purchase and sale of seats in the Legislature.

He was a zealous advocate of the claims of the Roman Catholics, not only in 1797, when men's hearts were failing them for fear, and in 1805 and 1808, when even his own gallant spirit partook of the general consternation, but in 1813 and 1821, when the baser motives for conciliating that part of our fellow-countrymen had ceased to operate. For at each successive period he was guided by the same immutable conviction that Christian truth must be independent of any such human policy as that which fettered the Roman Catholics, and was far too high and holy a thing to be defended by an offensive and irritating exclusion of its opponents from the exercise of any political franchise.

He was the zealous defender of the Toleration Act, against Mr. Pitt and Bishop Prettyman in 1800, and against Lord Sidmouth in 1811. For he judged that the real interests of Christianity required that all men should be free to diffuse their genuine religious opinions. But he was the equally zealous antagonist of the Maynooth Grant in 1807 and 1808, because he thought that the same interests forbade the intervention of the State itself to propagate doctrines condemned by our ecclesiastical and civil polity as deadly errors, and to maintain practices censured by the same polity as nothing less than idolatrous.

In the perilous times of 1797 and 1800, and in the times of supposed peril of 1817 and 1819, he defended the bills suspending the Habeas Corpus Act, and in 1806 he opposed the admission into the Cabinet of the Chief Justice of the King's Bench. For he habitually regarded himself as the depository of the sacred trust of transmitting our

great national institutions unimpaired to future times, whether they were assailed by democratic violence, or by the personal predilections or the party spirit of the minister of the day.

His zeal for public morality stimulated him not only to zealous efforts for diminishing the number of oaths, for the abolition of lotteries, and for rescuing the day of rest from profanation, but to an effort, far more opposed to his natural temper, to bring Warren Hastings to the punishment which, under the shelter of the relaxed and conventional morality of his judges, he ultimately escaped.

Yet Mr. Wilberforce was not to be drawn into the support or the rejection of any measure by arguments, however plausible or popular, which he considered to be erroneously deduced from the great laws of public morality; and therefore, at the expense of appearing to the multitude to abandon the standard under which he had so often rallied them, he refused to condemn the seizure of the Danish fleet at Copenhagen. Yet the same fixed resolve to obey his own conscience at whatever immediate pain, induced him to condemn, even with sternness, the ill-fated expedition to Walcheren, although it had brought overwhelming ridicule on the second Earl of Chatham, the brother of the most intimate of his early friends.

And this lofty determination, fearlessly to pursue the right, into whatever consequences it might conduct him, supplied him, as it not rarely happens, with much political truth, to which others more tardily and imperfectly attained by a merely intellectual process. This kind of intuitive wisdom made him a free trader in 1787 on the debate of the French and Portuguese commercial treaties — a bank restrictionist ten years later — the triumphant antagonist,

in 1806, of a tax on iron, the raw material of one of our great staple trades — and, in 1816, the opponent of the Income Tax, which was preventing those accumulations of capital on which the prosperity of all trades depends.

Ridicule, though distinctly foreseen and keenly apprehended, could not deter him from supporting an address to King George III. to use his influence for the delivery of Lafayette from his prison at Olmutz. Nor could his loyal attachment to that sovereign (who lived in his family so wisely, and governed his kingdom so disastrously), induce him to acquiesce in the grants to the Princes of the Royal House, or to oppose them silently, though, as we learn, Mr. Pitt was 'furious' on the occasion. While others were regarding the Australian continent only as a vast receptacle for convicts, his parliamentary influence was used for laying there the foundations of the Church which now occupies every inhabited district of New South Wales. While others were diverting the whole current of national expenditure to the support of the war, he was labouring, in the House of Commons, to obtain for the Church of England that increased assistance by which alone, as he believed, an effectual barrier could be raised amongst us against ignorance and vice, disaffection and anarchy.

It is difficult to reconcile the great contemporary influence, with the small posthumous celebrity, of so many of the eminent actors on the theatre of the world. It is often difficult to detect, or even to conjecture, what was the real secret of an authority long since expended, and which no extant record renders intelligible. In many of such cases it will be found that the power possessed by a man in his own generation depended, much more than we willingly believe, on his having

possessed, in his bodily organism, a meet interpreter for the movements of his soul. He may be great who addresses mankind by the pen, the pencil, or the chisel, if Minerva alone be propitious to him. But half Olympus must favour him who would rise to eminence by arts which bring him into daily intercourse with his fellow-men. Every hero of history has been a sort of Roscius in his way; as Louis XIV. became a kind of hero, merely because he excelled all mankind in the *rôle* of the Grand Monarque. Half the Parliamentary reputation of our own times rests on no higher ground. We therefore derogate nothing from Mr. Wilberforce in ascribing much of his influence in the House of Commons to his unrivalled dramatic powers. The student of the history of those times, who shall read some of the discourses which won for him so high a reputation, will scarcely avoid the belief that it was very ill merited. But if he had *heard* them fall from the lips of the speaker — if he had *seen* him rising with a spirit and self-reliance which Mercutio might have envied, and had listened to those tones, so full, liquid, and penetrating, and had watched the eye sparkling as each playful fancy crossed his field of vision, or glowing when he spoke of the oppressions done upon the earth — the fragile form elevating and expanding itself into heroic dignity — and the transitions of his gestures, so rapid and so complete, each successive attitude adapting itself so easily to each new variation of his style — he would no more have wondered at the efficacy even of ordinary topics and of common-place remarks from such a speaker, than at the magic of the tamest speech from the lips of Garrick or of Talma.

And yet it was neither in his parliamentary life, nor in the mixed intercourse of society, nor in the

throng of his almoners, nor amidst the crowds with whom he was accustomed to interchange the sympathies of great charitable meetings, that the range and force of his power over the hearts of his associates was most effectually displayed. The most potent incantations of this great magician were raised within the sacred circle of his home. There his wife, the daughter of Isaac Spooner, a country gentleman in Warwickshire, and their four sons (destined, afterwards, to become conspicuous members of society), and their two daughters, and his only sister and her husband, formed the interior of the many circles of which he was the common centre. It was incomparably the dearest; yet he loved much the second group, composed, as it was, of his more remote kindred, and of the chosen friends of his youth; and much he delighted in the third, thronged as it continually was, by the associates of his labours for the commonwealth and for the Church; and much also it rejoiced him to regale, with hospitable cheer, and kind or gay discourse, the remoter multitude who, from Gades to Ganges, sought admittance at his house, some to gratify their curiosity, some to explain every grievance suffered beneath the sun, and some to solicit countenance for schemes of beneficence, more numerous and more varied than ever were conceived in Laputa, or accomplished in the New Atlantis.

But in proportion to the shortness of the radii was the warmth and brightness at the circumference. With his wife and children about him, the aged William Wilberforce became once more a child, and seemed for the moment scarcely older than his boys. Their glad voices found in his a no less joyous echo, or, rising spontaneously to the level of their mirth, his spirits would appear as unbroken as their own.

Nor were kind filial artifices wanting to lure the old man to the sheltered walk where he liked best to stroll, and there to guide him to those recollections on which he dwelt with the fondest delight, and the most abounding affluence of anecdote and of reflection. From such topics the transition was easy, and indeed inevitable, to the thoughts which had settled down into the lowest depths of his soul, but which he never poured out in so full a current, or illustrated with such fertility, as when his sons had gathered round him. Then he would speak, as if touching the lyre of David, of all the relations between the divine nature and the human, and would find in every incident of his past life, in whatever he had observed of the lives of others, in each passage of Holy Writ, and every well-remembered poem, in the whole world, visible or audible, buttresses and ornaments for the two main pillars of his creed, — the first, that God is love; the second, that God is truth.

Whoever had wished to find fault with the social habits and demeanour of Mr. Wilberforce, would have complained of his too rapid movement and versatility of mind, which left no room for repose, and for that deliberate interchange of intelligence and opinion, to which repose is indispensable. But this excitement and hurry of spirit was subdued, in the society of his wife and children, by the jealous tenderness which deprecated the association, in their minds, with the idea of himself, of any other than laudable, and reverent, and affectionate remembrances. Even in their boyhood he listened to his sons with a staid and sober quietness, foreign to his ordinary manners; and in their manhood invited their information, courted their advice, and deferred to their judgment with the same kindly confidence with which

he stayed his feeble steps by leaning on their more vigorous arms.

Friendship never assumed a more touching form His paternal tenderness had not, even in their early years, degenerated into fondness, or expressed itself by caresses, or by a blind and partial admiration. On the contrary, it was with an almost morbid acuteness that he detected the germs of evil, moral or intellectual, in his children, and watched the growth, or the decline, of any wayward humour or dangerous propensity in them. When, however, the anxious days of their education were completed, then, if ever, might be traced on his venerable countenance one flush of human pride as he would exclaim, 'I have had three sons at Oxford, and all of them first-class men. Show me the man who can make the same boast!' As years rolled on, and he saw two of those sons presbyters of the Church of England, and the third self-devoted to the same high office, there was no longer room in his heart for any emotion less profound than that of adoring gratitude, that his habitual prayer for them had been heard. If they had brought home royal patents placing them among the chief nobles of the realm, he would have regarded them as mean and worthless honours, compared with that which their ordination to that sacred function had conferred upon his house.

And who that ever witnessed can ever forget the solemn and delighted complacency with which he took his seat among the congregation to which either of his sons was to minister — the childlike docility with which he listened to the voice of his child —how he rejoiced to gather, for his own spiritual nutriment, the ripe harvest of the seeds which, in earlier days, he had himself sown in their minds — with what a

grave and tender joy he partook of the domestic devotions which they had learnt from himself to offer — and in what tones of almost oppressive gratitude to God, he would speak of the delight of accompanying one of them in his pastoral visits, and of joining in the prayers which his young messenger of the Gospel of Peace had there poured forth by the beds of his sick or dying parishioners.

Many years have since passed over those who, at that time, gazed upon that aged father, so joyous and so placid, his fading eye and furrowed cheek reflecting the dawn of the eternal day then about to rise upon him, his work on earth accomplished, and his earthly hopes fulfilled, blessing his children, and blessed by them; and although those years have brought with them such events as to render dim and obscure almost every other retrospect, the imperishable image of that old man — contemplating, so serenely, from the narrow isthmus of life, the world he had loved and served so long, and the world for which he had been so long maturing — still possesses their memories in unimpaired distinctness; attesting to them that even the Valley of the Shadow of Death may smile like the green pastures, and be tranquil as the waters of comfort, to one who descends into it, sustained by the staff, and defended by the rod, of the Good Shepherd, whose guidance he has followed all his journey through.

The kind Providence which thus conducted him withdrew him from the conflicts of public life before he had lost the strength without which retirement can neither be really enjoyed nor fitly improved. In the year 1825 he quitted Parliament to pass the rest of his days in the bosom of his family. There, however, he did not entirely escape those sorrows which

usually gather round us as the shadows grow long. He had to weep by the dying beds of each of his two daughters; and, from that want of worldly wisdom which always characterised him, he lost a considerable part of his fortune in a speculation from which he had nothing to gain or to hope but the gratification of parental kindness.

Never were such misfortunes more effectually baffled by the invulnerable peace of a cheerful and self-approving heart. There were not, indeed, wanting external circumstances of a painful character which marked his comparative poverty, but the most close and intimate observer could never perceive in his countenance or in his demeanour so much as a passing shade of dejection or anxiety on that account. He might, indeed, have been supposed to be unconscious that he had lost anything, but for the remarks which occasionally fell from him on the divine goodness which had converted the seeming calamity into a blessing to his children and to himself.

Two of them had by this time become incumbents of parsonages, — of which one stood on the pleasant hills which skirt the Medway, and the other on the slope which connects the high downs of the Isle of Wight with the adjacent ocean. In his altered fortunes he found a welcome apology for withdrawing from society at large to gladden by his almost constant presence those quiet homes of the sons by whom his biography has since been written. There, surrounded by his wife, his children, and his grandchildren, he yielded himself to the current of each successive desire; for he had now acquired that rare maturity of the moral stature in which the conflict between inclination and duty is over, and virtue and self-indulgence are the same.

As his later years wore away, some decline of his intellectual powers was occasionally perceptible to the friends of his earlier and more active days. But in general it was otherwise; and, after an evening saunter with him on the sands which stretch towards the Needles, or beneath the holly hedges which skirt the hop-gardens in the northern district of Kent, it was difficult not to recall and (silently at least) to apply to him the apostrophe of Cowley to the aged author of the 'Leviathan:' —

> 'Nor can the snows which now cold age hath shed
> Upon thy reverend head,
> Quench or allay the noble fires within:
> For all that thou hast been, and all that youth can be,
> Thou 'rt yet — so fully still dost thou
> Possess the manhood and the bloom of wit.
> To things immortal time can do no wrong,
> And that which never is to die, for ever must be young.'

The end of his pilgrimage was now drawing near, and gradual, gentle, and serene was his descent to the dark waters through which all must pass to the unseen and unimaginable regions which lie beyond. The heavenly guide who had thus far conducted him did not desert him now. Looking back with gratitude — sometimes eloquent, and sometimes striving in vain for utterance — to his long career of usefulness, of honour, and of enjoyment, he watched, with grave composure, the ebb of the current which was fast bearing him to his eternal reward. After a very brief illness, and with no indication of bodily suffering, he died, in his seventy-fifth year, in undisturbed tranquillity, — breathing out to all who surrounded him in his latest hours, benedictions full of love, and thoughts dictated by heavenly wisdom, not without the irradiation of one, at least, of those bright gleams

of gaiety which, in his happy nature, no shadow was ever deep enough entirely to obscure.

He was laid in the grave in Westminster Abbey in the presence of a large number of the members of both Houses of Parliament, and with all the solemnities which their zeal could devise to express their sense of the services, the dignity, and the worth of the colleague they deplored. Never had the solemn ritual of the Church been pronounced over the grave of any of her children with more affecting or more appropriate truth. Never were recited on a more fitting occasion the solemn words, 'I heard a voice from Heaven saying unto me — Write. From henceforth blessed are the dead which die in the Lord. Even so saith the Spirit; for they rest from their labours.'

The book * to which (not unaided by other sources of knowledge) we are chiefly indebted for this rapid survey of the life and character of Mr. Wilberforce, contains some incidental notices of the eminent persons with whom he associated. The contribution thus made to the biographical history of that time is less extensive than might have been anticipated; and, indeed, less interesting, except as it throws some light on the private life of Mr. Pitt, of whose personal habits the world at large has scarcely any intelligence. In these volumes a glimpse of him is caught at one time as he passes an evening in classical studies or amusements with Mr. Canning, and at another as, with the aid of Mr. Wilberforce and Lord Grenville, he cuts a walk through his plantations at Holwood. On the whole, however, the William Pitt of this work

* The Life of William Wilberforce, by his sons, Robert Isaac Wilberforce, M.A., and Samuel Wilberforce, M.A. In five volumes. London, 1838. Murray.

is the austere Minister with whom we were already so well acquainted, not the man himself, in his natural, or in his emancipated, state.

The following extract of a letter from Mr. Wilberforce, is almost the only passage which gives us an intimation of the careless familiarity in which, for many years, they lived together:—

'And now, after having transacted my business with the Minister, a word or two to the man—a character in which, if it is more pleasant to you, it is no less pleasant to me to address you. I wish you may be passing your time half as salubriously and comfortably as I am at Gisborne's, where I am breathing good air, eating good mutton, keeping good hours, and enjoying the company of good friends. You have only two of the four at command, nor these always in so pure a state as in Needwood Forest; your town mutton being apt to be woolly, and your town friends to be interested: however, I sincerely believe you are, through the goodness of Providence, better off in the latter particular than has been the fate of ninety-nine Ministers out of a hundred; and as for the former, the quantity you lay in may in some degree atone for the quality; and it is a sign that neither in friends nor mutton you have yet lost your taste. Indeed, I shall reckon it a bad symptom of your moral or corporeal state, as the case may be, when your palate is so vitiated, that you cannot distinguish the true from the false flavour. All this is sad stuff, but you must allow us gentlemen who live in forests to be a little figurative. I will only add, however (that I may not quite exhaust your patience), that I hope you will never cease to relish me, and do me the justice to believe the in-

gredients are good, though you may not altogether approve of the cooking. Yours ever,

'W. WILBERFORCE.

'P. S.—Remember me to all friends. I hope you have no more gout, &c. If you will at any time give me a line (though it be but a mouthful) I shall be glad of it. You will think me be-Burked like yourself.'

On the occasion of Mr. Pitt's duel with Mr. Tierney, Mr. Wilberforce had designed to bring the subject under the notice of the House of Commons. The intention was defeated by the following kind and characteristic letter:—

'My dear Wilberforce,

'I am not the person to argue with you on a subject in which I am a good deal concerned. I hope, too, that I am incapable of doubting your kindness to me (however mistaken I may think it), if you let any sentiment of that sort actuate you on the present occasion. I must suppose that some such feeling has inadvertently operated upon you, because, whatever may be your general sentiments on subjects of this nature, they can have acquired no new tone or additional argument from any thing that has passed in this transaction. You must be supposed to bring this forward in reference to the individual case.

'In doing so, you will be accessary in loading one of the parties with unfair and unmerited obloquy. With respect to the other party, myself, I feel it a real duty to say to you frankly that your motion is one for my removal. If any step on the subject is proposed in Parliament and agreed to, I shall feel from that moment that I can be of more use out

of office than in it; for in it, according to the feelings I entertain, I could be of none. I state to you, as I think I ought, distinctly and explicitly what I feel. I hope I need not repeat what I always feel personally to yourself.—Yours ever,

'WILLIAM PITT.

'Downing Street, Wednesday,
'May 30. 1798, 11 P.M.'

The following passage is worth transcribing as a graphic, though slight sketch of Mr. Pitt, from the pen of one who knew him so well:—

'When a statement had been made to the House of the cruel practices, approaching certainly to torture, by which the discovery of concealed arms had been enforced in Ireland, John Claudius Beresford rose to reply, and said with a force and honesty, the impression of which I never can forget, "I fear, and feel deep shame in making the avowal—I fear it is too true—I defend it not—but I trust I may be permitted to refer, as some palliation of these atrocities, to the state of my unhappy country, where rebellion and its attendant horrors had roused on both sides to the highest pitch all the strongest passions of our nature." I was with Pitt in the House of Lords when Lord Clare replied to a similar charge—"Well, suppose it were so; but surely," &c. I shall never forget Pitt's look. He turned round to me with that indignant stare which sometimes marked his countenance, and stalked out of the House.'

It is not generally known that, at the period of Lord Melville's trial, a coolness almost approaching to estrangement had arisen between that Minister and Mr. Pitt. The following extract from one of Mr.

Wilberforce's Diaries on this subject affords an authentic and curious illustration of Mr. Pitt's character:—

'I had perceived above a year before that Lord Melville had not the power over Pitt's mind which he once possessed. Pitt was taking me to Lord Camden's, and in our *tete-à-tete* he gave me an account of the negotiations which had been on foot to induce him to enter Addington's Administration. When they quitted office in 1801, Dundas proposed taking as his motto, *Jam rude donatus*. Pitt suggested to him that having always been an active man, he would probably wish again to come into office, and then that his having taken such a motto would be made a ground for ridicule. Dundas assented, and took another motto. Addington had not long been in office, before Pitt's expectation was fulfilled, and Dundas undertook to bring Pitt into the plan; which was to appoint some third person head, and bring in Pitt and Addington on equal terms under him. Dundas accordingly, confiding in his knowledge of all Pitt's ways and feelings, set out for Walmer Castle; and after dinner, and port wine, began cautiously to open his proposals. But he saw it would not do, and stopped abruptly. "Really," said Pitt, with a sly severity, and it was almost the only sharp thing I ever heard him say of any friend, "I had not the curiosity to ask what I was to be."'

Amongst the letters addressed to Mr. Wilberforce, to be found in these volumes, is one written by John Wesley from his deathbed, on the day before he sank into the lethargy from which he was never roused. They are probably the last written words of that extraordinary man:—

'February 24. 1791.

'My dear Sir,

'Unless Divine power has raised you up to be as *Athanasius contra mundum*, I see not how you can go through your glorious enterprise, in opposing that execrable villany which is the scandal of religion, of England, and of human nature. Unless God has raised you up for this very thing, you will be worn out by the opposition of men and devils; but if God be for you, who can be against you? Are all of them together stronger than God? Oh! be not weary of well-doing. Go on in the name of God, and in the power of His might, till even American slavery, the vilest that ever saw the sun, shall vanish away before it. That He who has guided you from your youth up, may continue to strengthen you in this and all things, is the prayer of, dear sir, your affectionate servant, 'JOHN WESLEY.'

From a very different correspondent, Jeremy Bentham, Mr. Wilberforce received two notes, for which, as they are the only examples we have seen in print of his epistolary style, we must find a place:—

'Kind Sir,

'The next time you happen on Mr. Attorney-General, in the House or elsewhere, be pleased to take a spike — the longer and sharper the better — and apply it to him, by way of *memento*, that the Penitentiary Contract Bill has, for I know not what length of time, been sticking in his hands; and you will much oblige your humble servant to command,

'JEREMY BENTHAM.

'N.B.—A corking-pin was, yesterday, applied by Mr. Abbot.'

'I sympathise with your now happily promising exertions in behalf of the race of innocents, whose lot it has hitherto been to be made the subject-matter of depredation, for the purpose of being treated worse than the authors of such crimes are treated for those crimes in other places.'

There are, in this work, some occasional additions to the stock of political anecdotes. Of these we transcribe the following specimens: —

'Franklin signed the peace of Paris in his old spotted velvet coat (it being the time of a court-mourning, which rendered it more particular). "What," said my friend the negotiator, "is the meaning of that harlequin coat?" — "It is that in which he was abused by Wedderburne." He showed much rancour and personal enmity to this country — would not grant the common passports for trade, which were, however, easily got from Jay or Adams.

'Dined with Lord Camden; he very chatty and pleasant. Abused Thurlow for his duplicity and mystery. Said the King had said to him occasionally he had wished Thurlow and Pitt to agree; for that both were necessary to him — one in the Lords, the other in the Commons. Thurlow will never do any thing to oblige Lord Camden, because he is a friend of Pitt's. Lord Camden himself, though he speaks of Pitt with evident affection, seems rather to complain of his being too much under the influence of any one who is about him; particularly of Dundas, who prefers his countrymen whenever he can. Lord Camden is sure that Lord Bute got money by the Peace of Paris. He can account for his sinking near 300,000*l.* in land and houses; and his paternal estate in the island which bears his name, was not above

1500*l.* a year, and he is a life-tenant only of Wortley, which may be 8000*l.* or 10,000*l.* Lord Camden does not believe Lord Bute has any the least connexion with the King now, whatever he may have had. Lord Thurlow is giving constant dinners to the Judges, to gain them over to his party. ***** was applied to by *****, a wretched sort of dependent of the Prince of Wales, to know if he would lend money on the joint bond of the Prince and the Dukes of York and Clarence, to receive double the sum lent, whenever the King should die, and either the Prince of Wales, the Dukes of York and Clarence, come into the inheritance. The sum intended to be raised is 200,000*l.*

'''Tis only a hollow truce, not a peace, that is made between Thurlow and Pitt. They can have no confidence in each other.'

Boswell, the prince of biographers, has well-nigh ruined the art of biography. For, like every other art, it has its laws, or rather is bound by those laws to which all composition is subject, whether the pen or the pencil, the chisel or the musical chords, be the instrument with which we work. Of those canons, the chief is, that the artist must aim at unity of effect, and must therefore bring all the subordinate parts of his design into a tributary dependence on his principal object. Boswell (a man of true genius, however coarse his feelings, and however flagrant his self-conceit,) knew how to extract from every incident of his hero's life, and from the meanest alike and the noblest of his hero's associates, a series of ever-varying illustrations and embellishments of his hero's character. The imagination of Cervantes scarcely produced a portrait more single, harmo-

nious, and prominent, in the centre of innumerable sketches, and of groups which fill without crowding the canvass.

The imitators of this great master have aspired to the same success by the simple collocation of all facts, all letters, and all sayings, from which the moral, intellectual, or social nature of the main figure on their biographical easel, may be inferred. But in order to truth of effect, a narrator must suppress much of the whole truth. Charles V. of Spain, and Charles I. of England, still live in picture, as they lived in the flesh, because Titian and Vandyke knew how to exclude, to conceal, and to diminish, as well as how to copy. Imagination cannot do her work unless she be free in the choice of her materials; and if the work of imagination be undone, nothing is done which any distant times will hoard as a part of their literary inheritance.

Mr. Wilberforce was an admirable subject for the exercise of the dramatic power which converts a whole generation into a mirror, reflecting all the different attitudes, and glowing with all the shifting colours, of some one conspicuous and commanding form. A filial hand could not, without some impropriety, have used, if it had possessed, that power; and the time is perhaps too recent for any one to hazard such a performance. These volumes must therefore be considered as *mémoires pour servir*, in the composition of an historical picture of English society, political and religious, as it existed in the most eventful epoch of the history of England, and as it clustered round one of its most admirable members. Whoever shall undertake that task, will find here guides to whom it is impossible to deny the praise of fidelity and diligence, and unaffected modesty. Stu-

diously withdrawing themselves from the notice of their readers, they have made no display of their own theological, scientific, and literary wealth. Their work has been executed with ability, and with deep affection. If their father does not live in their pages as Madame de Stael described him — the most eloquent and the wittiest converser she had met in England — nor as tradition commemorates him — the ever bright and animating centre of the social system which gravitated round him — he is yet luminously exhibited in his still nobler character, as consuming his existence in labours for the Church, for the State, and for mankind, such as no other man in that age, and such as no private man in any age of his country's annals, had at once the genius and the will to render.

THE CLAPHAM SECT.

In one of those collections of Essays which have recently been detached from the main body of the Edinburgh Review, (the writers of that Journal following therein the policy of Constantine and of Charlemagne, when dividing their otherwise too extensive Empires into distinct though associated sovereignties,) there occur certain pleasant allusions, already rendered obscure by the lapse of time, to a religious sect or society, which, as it appears, was flourishing in this realm in the reign of George III. What subtle theories, what clouds of learned dust, might have been raised by future Binghams, and by Du Pins yet unborn, to determine what was *The Patent Christianity*, and what *The Clapham Sect* of the nineteenth century, had not a fair and a noble author appeared to dispel, or at least to mitigate, the darkness! Something, indeed, had been done aforetime. The antiquities of Clapham, had they not been written in the *Britannia* of Mr. Lysons? Her beauties, had they not inspired the muse of Mr. Robins? But it was reserved for Mrs. Milner, in her life of Dean Milner, and for Lord Teignmouth, in his Life of his Father, to throw such light on her social and ecclesiastical state as will render the facetious Journalist * intelli-

* The Rev. Sydney Smith.

gible to future generations. Treading in their steps, and aided by their information, it shall be our endeavour to clear up still more fully, for the benefit of ages yet to come, this passage in the ecclesiastical history of the age which has just passed away.

Though living amidst the throes of Empires, and the fall of Dynasties, men are not merely warriors and politicians. Even in such times they buy and sell, build and plant, marry, and are given in marriage. And thus it happened, that during the war with revolutionary France, Henry Thornton, the then representative in Parliament of the borough of Southwark, having become a husband, became also the owner of a spacious mansion on the confines of the villa-cinctured common of Clapham.

It is difficult to consider the suburban retirement of a wealthy banker æsthetically (as the Germans have it); but, in this instance, the intervention of William Pitt imparted some dignity to an occurrence otherwise so unpoetical. He dismissed for a moment his budgets and his subsidies, for the amusement of planning an oval saloon, to be added to this newly purchased residence. It arose at his bidding, and yet remains, perhaps a solitary monument of the architectural skill of that imperial mind. Lofty and symmetrical, it was curiously wainscoted with books on every side, except where it opened on a far-extended lawn, reposing beneath the giant arms of aged elms and massive tulip-trees.

Few of the designs of the great Minister were equally successful. Ere many years had elapsed, the chamber he had thus projected became the scene of enjoyments which, amidst his proudest triumphs, he might well have envied, and witnessed the growth of projects more majestic than any which ever en-

gaged the deliberations of his Cabinet. For there, at the close of each succeeding day, drew together a group of playful children, and with them a knot of legislators, rehearsing, in sport or earnestly, some approaching debate; or travellers from distant lands; or circumnavigators of the worlds of literature and science; or the Pastor of the neighbouring Church, whose look announced him as the channel through which benedictions passed to earth from heaven; and, not seldom, a youth who listened, while he seemed to read the book spread out before him. There also was still a matronly presence, controlling, animating, and harmonising the elements of this little world, by a kindly spell, of which none could trace the working, though the charm was confessed by all. Dissolved in endless discourse, or rather in audible soliloquy, flowing from springs deep and inexhaustible, the lord of this well-peopled enclosure rejoiced over it with a contagious joy. In a few paces, indeed, he might traverse the whole extent of that patriarchal dominion. But within those narrow precincts were his Porch, his Studio, his Judgment-Seat, his Oratory; and 'the Church that was in his house,'—the reduced, but not imperfect resemblance of that innumerable company which his Catholic spirit embraced and loved, under all the varying forms which conceal their union from each other, and from the world. Discord never agitated that tranquil home; lassitude never brooded over it. Those demons quailed at the aspect of a man in whose heart peace had found a resting-place, though his intellect was incapable of repose.

Henry was the third son of John Thornton, a merchant, renowned in his generation for a munificence more than princely, and commended to the reverence

of posterity by the letters and the poetry of Cowper. The father was one of those rare men, in whom the desire to relieve distress assumes the form of a master passion ; and if faith be due to tradition, he indulged it with a disdain, alternately ludicrous and sublime, of the good advice which the eccentric have to undergo from the judicious. Conscious of no aims but such as might invite the scrutiny of God and man, he pursued them after his own fearless fashion — yielding to every honest impulse, relishing a frolic when it fell in his way, choosing his associates in scorn of mere worldly precepts, and worshipping with any fellow Christian whose heart beat in unison with his own, however inharmonious might be some of the articles of their respective creeds.

His son was the heir of his benevolence, but not of his peculiarities. If Lavater had been summoned to divine the occupation of Henry Thornton, he would probably have assigned to him the highest rank among the Judges of his native land. Brows capacious and serene, a scrutinising eye, and lips slightly separated, as of one who listens and prepares to speak, were the true interpreters of the informing mind within. It was a countenance on which were graven the traces of an industry alike quiet and persevering, of a self-possession unassailable by any strong excitement, and of an understanding keen to detect, and comprehensive to reconcile, distinctions. The judicial, like the poetical nature, is a birthright; and by that imprescriptible title he possessed it. Forensic debates were indeed beyond his province; but even in Westminster Hall, the noblest of her temples, Themis had no more devoted worshipper. To investigate the great controversies of his own and of all former times, was the chosen employment, to

pronounce sentence in them, the dear delight, of his leisure hours.

Nothing which fell within the range of his observation, escaped this curious inquiry. His own duties, motives, and habits, the characters of those whom he loved best, the intellectual resources and powers of his various friends and companions, the prepossessions, hereditary or conventional, to which he or they were subject, the maxims of society, the dogmas of the Church, the problems which were engaging the attention of Parliament or of political economists, and those which affected his own commercial enterprises — all passed in review before him, and were all in their turn adjudicated with the grave impartiality which the Keeper of the Great Seal is expected to exhibit. Truth, the foe of falsehood — truth, the antagonist of error — and truth, the exorcist of ambiguity — was the object of his supreme homage; and so reverential were the vows offered by him at her shrine, that he abjured the communion of those less devout worshippers, who throw over her the veil of fiction, or place her in epigrammatic attitudes, or disguise her beneath the mask of wit or drollery. To contemplate truth in the purest light, and in her own fair proportions, he was content that she should be unadorned by any beauties but such as belong to her celestial nature, and are inseparable from it. Hence his disquisitions did not always escape the reproach of drought and tediousness, or avoided it only by the cheerful tone and pungent sense with which they were conducted. He had as little pretension to the colloquial eloquence, as to the multifarious learning and transcendental revelations, of Samuel Taylor Coleridge. Yet the pilgrimages to Clapham and to Highgate were made with rival zeal,

and the relics brought back from each were regarded as of almost equal sanctity. If the philosophical poet dismissed his audience under the spell of theories compassing all knowledge, and of imagery peopling all space, the practical philosopher sent his hearers to their homes instructed in a doctrine, cheerful, genial, and active — a doctrine which taught them to be sociable and busy, to augment to the utmost of their power the joint stock of human happiness, and freely to take, and freely to enjoy, the share assigned to each by the conditions of that universal partnership. And well did the teacher illustrate his own maxims. The law of social duty, as interpreted in his domestic academy, was never expounded more clearly or more impressively than by his habitual example.

Having inherited an estate, which, though not splendid, was enough for the support of his commercial credit, he adjudged that it ought never to be increased by accumulation, nor diminished by sumptuousness; and he lived and died in the rigid practice of this decision. In the division of his income between himself and the poor, the share he originally assigned to them was nearly six-sevenths of the whole; and, as appeared after his death, from accounts kept with the most minute commercial accuracy, the amount expended by him in one of his earlier years, for the relief of distress, considerably exceeded nine thousand pounds. When he had become the head of a family, he reviewed this decree, and thenceforward regarded himself as trustee for the miserable, to the extent only of one-third of his whole expenditure. The same faithful record showed that the smallest annual payment ever paid by him on this account, amounted to two thousand pounds. As a legislator, he had condemned the unequal pressure of the direct taxes on the rich and the poor; but instead of so-

lacing his defeat with the narcotic of virtuous indignation combined with discreet parsimony, he silently raised his own contribution to the level of his speech. Tidings of the commercial failure of a near kinsman embarked him at once on an inquiry, how far he was obliged to indemnify those who might have given credit to his relative, in a reliance, however unauthorised, on his own resources; and again the coffers of the banker were unlocked by the astuteness of the casuist. A mercantile partnership, (many a year has passed since the disclosure could injure or affect any one,) which, without his knowledge, had obtained from his firm large and improvident advances, became so hopelessly embarrassed, that their bankruptcy was pressed on him as the only chance of averting from his own house the most serious disasters. He overruled the proposal, on the ground that they whose rashness had given to their debtors an unmerited credit, had no right to call on others to divide with them the consequent loss. To the last farthing he therefore discharged the liabilities of the insolvents, at a cost of which his own share exceeded twenty thousand pounds. Yet he was then declining in health, and the father of nine young children. Enamoured of truth, the living spirit of justice, he yielded the allegiance of the heart to justice, the outward form of truth. The law engraven on the tablet of his conscience, and executed by the ministry of his affections, was strictly interpreted by his reason as the supreme earthly judge. Whatever might be his topic, or whatever his employment, he never laid aside the Ermine.

And yet, for more than thirty years, he was a member of the unreformed parliament, representing there that people, so few and singular, who dare to

think, and speak, and act for themselves. He never gave one party vote, was never claimed as an adherent by any of the contending factions of his times, and, of course, neither won nor sought the favour of any. An impartial arbiter, whose suffrage was the honourable reward of superior reason, he sat apart and aloft, in a position which, though it provoked a splenetic sarcasm from Burke, commanded the respect even of those whom it rebuked.

To the great Whig doctrines of Peace, Reform, Economy, and Toleration, he lent all the authority of his name, and occasionally the aid of his voice. But he was an infrequent and unimpressive speaker, and sought to influence the measures of his day rather by the use of his pen, than by any participation in its rhetoric. His writings, moral, religious, and political, were voluminous, though destitute of any such mutual dependence as to unite them into one comprehensive system; or of any such graces of execution as to obtain for them permanent acceptance. But in a domestic liturgy, composed for the use of his own family, and made public after his death, he encountered, with as much success as can attend it, the difficulty of finding thoughts and language meet to be addressed by the ephemeral dwellers on the earth to Him who inhabiteth eternity. It is simple, grave, weighty, and reverential; and forms a clear, though a faint and subdued, echo of the voice in which the Deity has revealed his sovereign will to man. That will he habitually studied, adored, and laboured to adopt. Yet his piety was reserved and unobtrusive. Like the life blood throbbing in every pulse and visiting every fibre, it was the latent though perennial source of his mental health and energy.

A peace, perfect and unbroken, seemed to possess

him. His tribute of pain and sorrow was paid with a submission so tranquil, as sometimes to assume the appearance of a morbid insensibility. But his affections, unimpaired by lawless indulgence, and constant to their proper objects, were subject to a control to be acquired by no feebler discipline. Ills from without assailed him, not as the gloomy ministers of vengeance, but as the necessary exercise of virtues not otherwise to be called into activity. They came as the salutary lessons of a father, not as the penal inflictions of a judge. Nor did the Father, to whom he so meekly bowed, see fit to lay on him those griefs, under the pressure of which the bravest stagger. He never witnessed the irruption of death into his domestic paradise, nor the rending asunder by sin, the parent of death, of the bonds of love and reverence which united to each other the inmates of that happy home — a home happy in his presence from whose lips no morose, or angry, or impatient word ever fell; on whose brow no cloud of anxiety or discontent was ever seen to rest. Surrounded to his latest hours by those whom it had been his chief delight to bless and to instruct, he bequeathed to them the recollection of a wise, a good, and a happy man; that so, if in future life a wider acquaintance with the world should chill the heart with the scepticism so often engendered by such knowledge, they might be reassured in the belief that human virtue is no vain illusion; but that, nurtured by the dews of heaven, it may expand into fertility and beauty, even in those fat places of the earth which romance disowns, and on which no poet's eye will condescend to rest.

A goodly heritage! yet to have transmitted it (if that were all) would, it must be confessed, be an insufficient title to a place amongst memorable men.

Nor, except for what he accomplished as the associate of others, could that claim be reasonably preferred on behalf of Henry Thornton. Apart, and sustained only by his own resources, he would neither have undertaken, nor conceived, the more noble of those benevolent designs to which his life was devoted. Affectionate, but passionless — with a fine and indeed a fastidious taste, but destitute of all creative imagination — gifted rather with fortitude to endure calamity, than with courage to exult in the struggle with danger — a lover of mankind, but not an enthusiast in the cause of our common humanity — his serene and perspicacious spirit was never haunted by the visions, nor borne away by the resistless impulses, of which heroic natures, and they alone, are conscious. Well qualified to impart to the highest energies of others a wise direction, and inflexible perseverance, he had to borrow from them the glowing temperament which hopes against hope, and is wise in despite of prudence. He had not far or long to seek for such an alliance.

On the bright evening of a day which had run its course some thirty or forty summers ago, the usual groups had formed themselves in the library already celebrated. Addressing a nearer circle, might be heard above the unbusy hum the voice of the Prelector, investigating the characteristics of Seneca's morality perhaps; or, not improbably, the seizure of the Danish fleet; or, it might be, the various gradations of sanity as exhibited by Robert Hall or Joanna Southcote; when all pastimes were suspended, and all speculations put to flight, to welcome the approach of what seemed a dramatic procession, emerging from the deep foliage by which the further slopes of the now checkered lawn were overhung. In advance of the rest two noisy urchins were

putting to no common test the philanthropy of a tall shaggy dog, their playfellow, and the parental indulgence of the slight figure which followed them. Limbs scarcely stouter than those of Asmodeus, sustaining a torso as unlike as possible to that of Theseus, carried him along with the agility of an antelope, though under the weight of two coat-pockets, protuberant as the bags by which some learned brother of the coif announces and secures his rank as leader of his circuit. Grasping a pocket volume in one hand, he wielded in the other a spud, caught up in his progress through the garden, but instinct at his touch with more significance than a whole museum of horticultural instruments. At one instant, a staff, on which he leant and listened to the projector at his elbow developing his plan for the better coppering of ships' bottoms, at the next it became a wand, pointing out to a portly constituent from the Cloth Hall at Leeds some rich effect of the sunset; then a truncheon, beating time to the poetical reminiscences of a gentleman of the Wesleyan persuasion, looking painfully conscious of his best clothes and of his best behaviour; and ere the sacred cadence had reached its close, a cutlass, raised in mimic mutiny against the robust form of William Smith, who, as commodore of this ill-assorted squadron, was endeavouring to convoy them to their destined port. But little availed the sonorous word of command, or the heart-stirring laugh of the stout member for Norwich, to shape a straight course for the volatile representative of the county of York, now fairly under the canvass of his own bright and joyous fancies. He moved in obedience to some impulse like that which prompts the wheelings of the swallow, or the dodgings of the barbel. But whether he ad-

vanced, or paused, or revolved, his steps were still measured by the ever-changeful music of his own rich voice ranging over all the chords expressive of mirth and tenderness, of curiosity or surprise, of delight or of indignation. *Eheu, fugaces!* Those elder forms are all now reposing beneath the clods of the valley: those playful boys are Right Reverend and Venerable dignitaries of the Church; and he who then seemed to read while he listened silently, is now in the garrulity of declining years, telling old tales, and perhaps distorting in the attempt to revive them, pictures which have long since been fading from the memory. But for that misgiving, how easy to depict the nearer approach of William Wilberforce, and of the tail by which, like some Gaelic chief or Hibernian demagogue, he was attended! How easy to portray the joyous fusion of the noisy strollers across the lawn, with the quieter but not less happy assemblage which had watched and enjoyed their pantomime — to trace the confluence of the two streams of discourse, imparting grace and rapidity to the one, and depth and volume to the other — to paint the brightening aspect of the grave censor, as his own reveries were flashed back on him in picturesque forms and brilliant colours — or to delineate the subdued countenance of his mercurial associate, as he listened to profound contemplations on the capacities and the duties of man!

Of Mr. Wilberforce, we have had occasion to write so recently, and so much at large, that though the Agamemnon of the host we celebrate — the very sun of the Claphamic system — we pause not now to describe him. His fair demesne was conterminous with that of Mr. Thornton; nor lacked there sunny banks, or sheltered shrubberies, where, in each change of season, they revolved the captivity under which

man was groaning, and projected schemes for his deliverance. And although such conclaves might scarcely be convened except in the presence of these two, yet were they rarely held without the aid of others, especially of such as could readily find their way thither from the other quarters of the sacred village.

Yet to that village would not seldom resort guests from more rural abodes which in that age, ignorant of iron railways, were regarded as sequestered dwellings in remote districts of our island. Among them not the least frequent, or welcome, or honoured visitor, was one who descended to the table-land of Clapham Common from that loftier table-land, once covered by the ancient forest of Needwood. It is furrowed by several sloping valleys, each forming the bed of a rapid brook, which chafes and twists itself round the roots of oaks so venerable as to have sheltered the deer beneath their branches in the time of the Heptarchy. In later times a keeper's lodge, which takes its name from the adjacent village of Yoxall, was erected for the protection of the game at the confluence of two of these rivulets; for the bolts of 'Guy of good Gisborne' had not rarely stricken down the noblest bucks as they came to slake their thirst at those running waters. In the reign of George II. a family, deriving their name from the same 'Gisborne,' had added Yoxall Lodge to their large possessions, and pursued the sports of the forest with scarcely less ardour than the bold outlaw himself. But this hereditary passion for the chase did not descend to Thomas Gisborne, the second of the race among the modern proprietors of Yoxall Lodge. Though fortune had given him wealth, and nature had endowed him with a figure as graceful and as elastic as that of the

deer which peeped out on his mansion, from the neighbouring hollies, and though his spirit was brave and joyous, yet his stout heart and masculine intellect were wedded to a feminine soul. Though he never feared the face or the understanding of mortal man, he shrank with a kind of virgin sensitiveness from the coarse familiarities of the field and of the world. Though gay, even to uproar, in the morning of life, and in his interior circle, he appeared, beyond those narrow precincts, like a man driven by constitutional shyness into silence and seclusion. When, therefore, the freeholders of his native county proposed to send him as their representative to the House of Commons, he turned away with aversion from such a plunge into the miry waters of parliamentary strife, and from such an exile from the glades and the forest banks over which he rejoiced. He was not a man to be cajoled out of his own happiness by any concert of his neighbours' tongues, and escaped the importunities of the electors of Derbyshire by taking sanctuary in the Church. In early manhood he became one of her ministers, and sheltered himself, for the rest of his days, among the 'patrician trees' and the 'plebeian underwood' of his forest, from the conflicts of the aristocracy and commonalty of the Palace of Westminster.

Though secluded, he was not solitary. A daughter of the ancient family of Babington became the companion of his retirement, during a period of almost sixty years; staying her steps upon his arm, imbibing wisdom from his lips, and gathering hope and courage from his eye, with a homage which sometimes bore such a resemblance to a species of worship, as to draw from the object of it a raillery so playful, so tender, and so full of meaning, that perhaps it

ultimately enhanced the affectionate error which, for the moment, it rebuked.

Husband, father, and householder as he was, a house was all but a superfluity to Mr. Gisborne. From dawn till sunset he never willingly passed an hour away from the tangled brakes or the sunny uplands of Needwood, or the banks of the neighbouring Trent. There it was his joyful and inexhaustible employment to study the ways of nature, to investigate her laws, and to meditate the books by which he maintained his intercourse with the outer world. No plant lay in the large circuit of those daily walks, of which he did not understand the history and the use. No animal crossed his path or rose into the air before him, in which he did not recognise a familiar acquaintance. No picturesque grouping of the oaks and hollies in that ancient chase—no play of light or shade through their foliage—no glimpse of the remoter landscape caught his eye, without being treasured in his memory and transferred to his sketch-book. And when, as would occasionally happen, 'one much pent in cities' was permitted to partake in these forest rambles, Mr. Gisborne would throw aside, under the genial influence of the place, the reserve which hung upon him in crowded saloons, and would pour himself out in a stream of discourse, sometimes grave and speculative, but more frequently sparkling with humorous conceits, or eddying into retrospects of the comedy of life, of which he had been a most attentive, though too often a silent, spectator. Nothing could exceed the amiable good humour with which, on such occasions, he would amuse himself with the incapacity of his metropolitan companion to decipher, without his aid, a single line of that fair scroll of beauty and of wisdom which he himself could read in

every scene through which they passed. Their walks, however, would sometimes conduct them to a spot, the charm of which it required no rural tastes to feel, and no rural knowledge to interpret.

It was the populous village in which Mr. Gisborne ministered as a country clergyman. Among its poor inhabitants he seemed to remember nothing except that they were his flock, and he their pastor. Happy in his books, his pencil, his writings, and his home, he never was so happy as when, sitting by the poor man's hearth, he chatted with him about crops and village politics, or with the goodwife about her children, her chickens, and her bees, and then gently deposited, in hearts softened by his kindness, some prolific seeds of a more than human wisdom.

From the lodge, in the centre of the forest, to the fold thus settled on the slopes of it, there was happily a distance of three miles, which became to Mr. Gisborne a species of enlarged though most secluded Study, where, from day to day, he revolved that series of publications to which he was indebted throughout many years for an extensive influence and celebrity. That fame is now dying away. The thoughts of his times were widely dissimilar from those of the present generation. A more impassioned poetry, a severer philosophy, and a theology far more inquisitive and adventurous, are consigning to a premature oblivion many of his books, which his contemporaries hailed with delight and with predictions of enduring renown. Nor were those predictions uttered without much apparent reason. For Mr. Gisborne contributed largely to the formation of the national mind on subjects of the highest importance to the national character. He was the expositor of the 'Evangelical' system to those cultivated or fastidious readers, who

were intolerant of the ruder style of his less refined brethren. He addressed them as a poet, as a moralist, as a natural philosopher, and as a divine. But he wrought in a spirit, which, though perfectly free and independent, was yet imitative. Cowper was his model in poetry; Paley, whom he opposed, was yet the prompter of his moral philosophy; and Bishop Tomline suggested the most considerable of his theological treatises. His literary fame, if it shall indeed endure the competitions of a later age, must rest on his sermons. They were regarded by his contemporaries as models in a style of composition in which the English language has scarcely a single specimen of excellence. Except one or two discourses of South, and as many of Robert Hall, we have absolutely nothing to put in competition with the pulpit oratory of France. We possess, indeed, many homiletical essays of exuberant power, wealth, and eloquence, but scarcely an attempt attesting even the consciousness of what constitutes the perfection of a homily. Mr. Gisborne approached more nearly than any Anglican clergyman of his time towards the ideal of that much neglected art. His sermons were perspicuous in the analysis of truth, and energetic in the inculcation of it. He knew how to assign to the principal topic of each discourse its due predominance, and to the collateral topics their just subordination. His sermons were remarkable for that unity of design which is indispensable to beauty, and that elevated singleness of purpose, without which the most exquisite graces of composition are utterly worthless in the pulpit. They were scriptural, uncompromising, and transparently luminous; and deservedly obtained a cordial acceptance and a wide popularity. If the unction of Mr. Gisborne's addresses had been equal to their vigour;

if the sentiment had been as profound as it was genuine, or as elevated as it was just; if the style had been as easy as it was correct; if imagination had done her work as effectually as taste performed her office; if, in a word, those sermons had been animated by the soul of an orator as fully as they were moulded by the hand of an artist, a scholar, and a divine, they would have been not merely the delight of his own times, but a part of the literary inheritance of Englishmen in our own and in future ages.

There have been saints of every possible variety of Christian heroism, — martyrs of truth and martyrs of humanity, thaumaturgists and ascetics, mystics and missionaries. But there is a form of sanctity more rare than any of these, and more excellent than most of them. It is that sanctity which 'passing through the valley of Baca maketh it a well,' which throws over this dark world an atmosphere like that of a yet unforfeited paradise. It is the sanctity of happiness. It is the conversion of the life of man into a continued eucharistic service, rendered to a gracious father by a grateful and confiding child.

There are yet living some who passed many years in the closest intimacy with Thomas Gisborne which can subsist between men of different generations, who, looking back on that long familiar intercourse, can recollect nothing which detracted from his apparently unsullied innocency: — no irreverent forgetfulness of the divine presence, and no ostentatious recognition of it; no haughtiness of spirit, no morose or vindictive temper, no morbid desire for human applause, no cold indifference to human affection, no inordinate self-indulgence, no world idolatry. Such self-conquest is the indispensable basis of whatever else is great in human character. The

philanthropists of vice and self-indulgence delineated by Fielding and Sheridan are as absolute chimeras as the centaurs and hypogriffs of romance. Yet no accumulation of mere negative virtues will render any man either great or good. To a conscience void of offence, Mr. Gisborne added a kind of passion for all the works of God, animate and inanimate, and a profound and tranquil love of God himself. It was no unseemly or loquacious affection, but a grave and cheerful complacency, resting on the meek assurance that he was himself the object of the unceasing benignity of his Maker. The sun shone with a mild and unclouded lustre on his path, as he pursued it from his youth to the grave, with tranquil energy and undisturbed composure.

It is better to go to the house of mourning than to the house of feasting; but it is better still to go to the house of heaven-descended peace and heaven-ascending thankfulness. They who once passed many happy days beneath the roof of Thomas Gisborne, have since visited many an abode of sorrow and of joy, bearing with them a recollection which may have allayed both the tumultuous mirth and the depressing sorrows of this transient state. It is the recollection of one to whom every thing yielded some innocent delight, and over whom nothing ever cast a cloud of melancholy. Their memories recall the chamber in which he passed such of his studious hours as were withdrawn from his out-door life — a chamber which it might seem no dealer in household furniture had ever been permitted to enter, but where books and manuscripts, plants and pallets, tools and philosophical instruments, birds perched on the shoulder, or nestling in the bosom of the student, or birds curiously stuffed by his hands, usurped the places

usually assigned to the works of the upholsterer. They can still revive the remembrance of his library, embellished with his own paintings, and thronged with kindred, friends, and neighbours, among whom he would sometimes converse with the mature wisdom of old age, and sometimes disport himself with the unrestrained gaiety of boyhood. Theology, literature, art, natural history, gardening, and rambles through his forest, filled the leisure of a life devoted to pastoral and to domestic duties. Yet they did not deprive him either of the time or of the inclination to take his share in those pursuits to which his friends at Clapham had consecrated their existence. His heart was with them. His pen and his purse were ever at their command.

During a period of more than fifty years, an intimacy the most confiding and affectionate, united Thomas Gisborne to William Wilberforce. The member for Yorkshire made Yoxall Lodge his country residence, and the Staffordshire divine had his suburban sojourn at the house of his friend at Clapham. Among the sectaries of that village he took his share in labour and in deliberation, whether the abolition of the slave trade, the diffusion of Christianity, the war against vice and ignorance, or the advancement of evangelical theology, was the object of the passing day. Yet, when he was engaged in these public duties, they who knew him best would perceive that their publicity was painful, and their seeming ostentation offensive to him. When seated at the cabinet held in the library of Henry Thornton, it was obvious that the heart of Thomas Gisborne was still turning to his parish, and that his imagination was far away in the recesses of his forest. It had been the cradle of his childhood; and there, at the age of

eighty-seven, his body was committed to the grave in the fulness of that sure and certain hope which had thrown her bright hues over every passage of his protracted residence on earth. It was committed to the grave in the fulness of that soothing and grateful memory, also, which they who stood together round his bier retained of a father and of a friend, from whom they had learned very many lessons; but above all, the lesson that though the path through earth to heaven be usually pursued through a vale of tears, it may also be sometimes pursued through green pastures, and by waters of comfort, with a light from heaven itself lightening every step, and shining more and more unto the perfect day.

It is not permitted to any Coterie altogether to escape the spirit of Coterie. Clapham Common, of course, thought itself the best of all possible commons. Such, at least, was the opinion of the less eminent of those who were entitled to house-bote and dinner-bote there. If the common was attacked, the whole homage was in a flame. If it was laughed at, there could be no remaining sense of decency amongst men. The commoners admired in each other the reflection of their own looks, and the echo of their own voices. A critical race, they drew many of their canons of criticism from books and talk of their own parentage; and for those on the outside of the pale, there might be, now and then, some failure of charity. Their festivities were not exhilarating. New faces, new topics, and a less liberal expenditure of wisdom immediately after dinner, would have improved them. Thus, even at Clapham, the discerning might perceive the imperfections of our common nature, and take up the lowly confession of the great Thomas Erskine — 'After all, gentlemen, I am but a man.'

But if not more than men, they were not less. They had none of the intellectual coxcombry since so prevalent. They did not instil philosophic and political neology into young ladies and officers of the Guards, through the gentle medium of the fashionable novel. They mourned over the ills inseparable from the progress of society, without shrieks or hysterics. They were not epicures for whose languid palates the sweets of the rich man's banquet must be seasoned with the acid of the poor man's discontent. Their philanthropy did not languish without the stimulant of satire; nor did it degenerate into a mere ballet of tender attitudes and sentimental pirouettes. Their philosophy was something better than an array of hard words. Their religion was something more than a collection of impalpable essences; too fine for analysis, and too delicate for use. It was a hardy, serviceable, fruit-bearing, and patrimonial religion.

They were the sons, by natural or spiritual birth, of men, who, in the earlier days of Methodism, had shaken off the lethargy in which, till then, the Church of England had been entranced — of men, by whose agency the great evangelic doctrine of faith, emerging in its primeval splendour, had not only overpowered the contrary heresies, but had perhaps obscured some kindred truths. This earlier generation of the evangelic school had been too ingenuous, and too confident in the divine reality of their cause, to heed much what hostility they might awaken. They had been content to pass for fools, in a world whose boasted wisdom they accounted folly. In their one central and all-pervading idea, they had found an influence hardly less than magical. They had esteemed it impossible to inculcate too emphatically, or too widely, that truth which Paul had

proclaimed indifferently to the idolaters of Ephesus, the revellers of Corinth, the sophists of Athens, and the debauched citizens of sanguinary Rome.

Their sons adopted the same creed with equal sincerity and undiminished earnestness, but with a far keener sense of the hindrances opposed to the indiscriminate and rude exhibition of it. Absolute as was the faith of Mr. Wilberforce and his associates, it was not possible that the system called 'Evangelical,' should be asserted by them in the blunt and uncompromising tone of their immediate predecessors. A more elaborate education, greater familiarity with the world and with human affairs, a deeper insight into science and history, with a far nicer discernment of mere conventional proprieties, had opened to them a range of thought, and had brought them into relations with society, of which their fathers were comparatively destitute. Positiveness, dogmatism, and an ignorant contempt of difficulties, may accompany the firmest convictions, but not the convictions of the firmest minds. The freedom with which the vessel swings at anchor, ascertains the soundness of her anchorage. To be conscious of the force of prejudice in ourselves and others, to feel the strength of the argument we resist, to know how to change places internally with our antagonists, to understand why it is that we provoke their scorn, disgust, or ridicule — and still to be unshaken, still to adhere with fidelity to the standard we have chosen — this is a triumph, to be won by those alone on whom is bestowed not merely the faith which overcomes the world, but the pure and peaceable wisdom which is from above.

And such were they whom the second generation of the Evangelical party acknowledged as their secular chiefs. They fell on days much unlike those

which we, their children, have known — days less softened by the charities and courtesies, but less enervated by the frivolities of life. Since the fall of the Roman republic, there had not arisen within the bosom, and armed with the weapons, of civilisation itself, a power so full of menace to the civilised world as that which then overshadowed Europe. In the deep seriousness of that dark era, they of whom we speak looked back for analogies to that remote conflict of the nations, and drew evil auguries from the event of the wars which, from Sylla to Octavius, had dyed the earth with the blood of its inhabitants, to establish at length a military despotism — ruthless, godless, and abominable. But they also reverted to the advent, even in that age of lust and cruelty, of a power destined to wage successful war, not with any external or earthly potentate, but with the secret and internal spring of all this wretchedness and wrong — the power of love, incarnate though divine — of love exercised in toils and sufferings, and at length yielding up life itself, that from that sacrifice might germinate the seeds of a new and enduring life — the vital principle of man's social existence, of his individual strength, and of his immortal hopes.

And as, in that first age of Christianity, truth, and with it heavenly consolation, had been diffused, not alone or chiefly by the lifeless text, but by living messengers proclaiming and illustrating the renovating energy of the message entrusted to them; so to those who, at the commencement of this century, were anxiously watching the convulsions of their own age, it appeared that the sorrows of mankind would be best assuaged, and the march of evil most effectually stayed, by a humble imitation of that inspired example. They therefore formed themselves into a con-

federacy, carefully organized and fearlessly avowed, to send forth into all lands, but above all into their own, the two witnesses of the Church — Scripture and Tradition; — scripture, to be interpreted by its divine Author to the devout worshippers — tradition, not of doctrinal tenets, but of that unextinguishable zeal, which, first kindled in the apostolic times, has never since wanted either altars to receive, or attendant ministers to feed and propagate the flame. Bibles, schools, missionaries, the circulation of evangelical books, and the training of evangelical clergymen, the possession of well attended pulpits, war through the press, and war in parliament, against every form of injustice which either law or custom sanctioned — such were the forces by which they hoped to extend the kingdom of light, and to resist the tyranny with which the earth was threatened.

Nor was it difficult to distinguish or to grapple with their antagonists. The slave trade was then brooding like a pestilence over Africa; that monster iniquity which fairly outstripped all abhorrence, and baffled all exaggeration — converting one quarter of this fair earth into the nearest possible resemblance of what we conceive of hell, reversing every law of Christ, and openly defying the vengeance of God. The formation of the holy league, of which we are the chroniclers, synchronised with that unhappy illness which, half a century ago, withdrew Thomas Clarkson from the strife to which he was set apart and consecrated; leaving his associates to pursue it during the twelve concluding years, unaided by his presence, but not without the aid of his example, his sympathy, and his prayers. They have all long since passed away, while he still lives (long may he live!) to enjoy honours and benedictions, for which the

diadem of Napoleon, even if wreathed with the laurels of Goethe, would be a mean exchange. But, alas! it is not given to any one, not even to Thomas Clarkson, to enjoy a glory complete and unalloyed. Far from us be the attempt to pluck one leaf from the crown which rests on that time-honoured head. But with truth there may be no compromise, and truth wrings from us the acknowledgment, that Thomas Clarkson never lived at Clapham!

Not so that comrade in his holy war, whom, of all that served under the same banner, he seems to have loved the best. At the distance of a few bow-shots from the house of Henry Thornton, was the happy home in which dwelt Granville Sharpe; at once the abiding guest and the bosom friend of his more wealthy brothers. A critic, with the soul of a churchwarden, might indeed fasten on certain metes and bounds, hostile to the parochial claims of the family of Sharpe; but in the wider ken and more liberal judgment of the historian, the dignity of a true Claphamite is not to be refused to one whose evening walk and morning contemplations led him so easily and so often within the hallowed precincts.

Would that the days of Isaac Walton could have been prolonged to the time when Granville Sharpe was to be committed to the care of the biographers! His likeness from the easel of the good old Angler would have been drawn with an outline as correct and firm, and in colours as soft and as transparent, as the portraits of Hooker or of Herbert, of Donne or of Walton. A narrative, no longer than the liturgy which they all so devoutly loved, would then have superseded the annals which now embalm his memory beneath that nonconforming prolixity which they all so devoutly hated.

The grandson of an Archbishop of York, the son of an Archdeacon of Northumberland, the brother of a Prebendary of Durham, Granville Sharpe, descending to the rank from which Isaac Walton rose, was apprenticed to a linen-draper of the name of Halsey, a Quaker, who kept his shop on Tower Hill. When the Quaker died, the indentures were transferred to a Presbyterian of the same craft. When the Presbyterian retired, they were made over to an Irish Papist. When the Papist quitted the trade, they passed to a fourth master, whom the apprentice reports to have had no religion at all. At one time a Socinian took up his abode at the draper's, and assaulted the faith of the young apprentice in the mysteries of the Trinity and the Atonement. Then a Jew came to lodge there, and contested with him the truth of Christianity itself. But blow from what quarter it might, the storm of controversy did but the more endear to him the shelter of his native nest, built for him by his forefathers, like that of the swallow of the Psalmist, in the courts and by the altar of his God. He studied Greek to wrestle with the Socinian—he acquired Hebrew to refute the Israelite—he learned to love the Quaker, to be kind to the Presbyterian, to pity the Atheist, and to endure even the Roman Catholic. Charity (so he judged) was nurtured in his bosom by these early polemics, and the affectionate spirit which warmed to the last the current of his maturer thoughts, grew up, as he believed, within him, while alternately measuring crapes and muslins, and defending the faith against infidels and heretics.

The cares of the mercer's shop engaged no less than seven years of a life destined to be held in

grateful remembrance as long as the language, or the history of his native land shall be cultivated among men. The next eighteen were consumed in the equally obscure employment of a clerk in the office of Ordnance. Yet it was during this period that Granville Sharpe disclosed to others, and probably to himself, the nature, so singular and so lovely, which distinguished him — the most inflexible of human wills, united to the gentlest of human hearts — an almost audacious freedom of thought, combined with profound reverence for hoar authority — a settled conviction of the wickedness of our race, tempered by an infantine credulity in the virtue of each separate member of it — a burning indignation against injustice and wrong, reconciled with pity and long-suffering towards the individual oppressor — all the sternness which Adam has bequeathed to his sons, wedded to all the tenderness which Eve has transmitted to her daughters.

As long as Granville Sharpe survived, it was too soon to proclaim that the age of chivalry was gone. The Ordnance clerk sat at his desk with a soul as distended as that of a Paladin bestriding his war-horse; and encountered with his pen such giants, hydras, and discourteous knights, as infested the world in the eighteenth century. He found the lineal representative of the Willoughbys de Parham in the person of a retired tradesman; and buried himself in pedigrees, feoffments, and sepulchral inscriptions, till he saw his friend enjoying his ancestral privileges among the Peers of Parliament. He combated, on more than equal terms, the great Hebraist, Dr. Kennicott, in defence of Ezra's catalogue of the sacred vessels, chiefs, and families. He laboured long, and

with good success, to defeat an unjust grant made by the Treasury to Sir James Lowther of the Forest of Inglewood, and the manor and castle of Carlisle. He waged a less fortunate war against the theatrical practice of either sex appearing in the habiliments of the other. He moved all the powers of his age, political and intellectual, to abolish the impressment of seamen, and wound up a dialogue with Johnson on the subject, by opposing the scriptural warning, 'Woe to them that call evil good, and good evil,' to what he described as the 'plausible sophistry and important self-sufficiency' of the Sage. Presenting himself to the then Secretary of State, Lord Dartmouth, he denounced, with prophetic solemnity, the guilt of despoiling and exterminating in the Charib war that miserable remnant of the aboriginal race of the Antilles. As a citizen of London, he came to the rescue of Crosby, the Lord Mayor, in his struggle with the House of Commons. As a citizen of the world, he called on earth and heaven to stay the plagues of slavery and the slave-trade, and advocated the independence of America with such ardour as to sacrifice to it his own. Orders had reached his office to ship munitions of war to the revolted colonies. If his hand had entered the account of such a cargo, it would have contracted in his eyes the stain of innocent blood. To avoid that pollution he resigned his place, and his means of subsistence, at a period of life when he could no longer hope to find any other lucrative employment. But he had brothers who loved and supported him; and his release from the fatigues of a subordinate office left him free to obey the impulses of his own brave spirit, as the avenger of the oppressed.

While yet a chronicler of gunpowder and small

arms, a negro, abandoned to disease, had asked of him an alms. Silver and gold he had none, but such as he had he gave him. He procured for the poor sufferer medical aid, and watched over him with affectionate care until his health was restored. The patient, once more become sleek and strong, was an object on which Barbadian eyes could not look without cupidity; and one Lisle, his former master, brought an action against Granville Sharpe for the illegal detention of his slave. Three of the infallible doctors of the Church of Westminster — Yorke, Talbot, and Mansfield — favoured the claim; and Blackstone, the great expositor of her traditions, hastened, at their bidding, to retract a heresy on this article of the faith into which his uninstructed reason had fallen. Not such the reverence paid by the hard-working clerk to the inward light which God had vouchsafed to him. He conned his entries indeed, and transcribed his minutes all day long, just as if nothing had happened; but throughout two successive years he betook himself to his solitary chamber, there, night by night, to explore the original sources of the Law of England, in the hope that so he might be able to correct the authoritative dogmas of Chancellors and Judges. His inquiries closed with the firm conviction that, on this subject at least, these most learned persons were but shallow pretenders to learning. In three successive cases he struggled against them with various and doubtful success; when fortune, or, be it rather said, when Providence, threw in his way the negro Somerset.

For the vindication of the freedom of that man, followed a debate, ever memorable in legal history for the ability with which it was conducted; — for the first introduction to Westminster Hall of Francis

Hargrave; — for the audacious assertion then made by Dunning, of the maxim, that a new brief will absolve an advocate from the disgrace of publicly retracting any avowal however solemn, of any principle however sacred; — for the reluctant abandonment by Lord Mansfield of a long-cherished judicial error; — and for the recognition of a rule of law of such importance, as almost to justify the poets and rhetoricians in their subsequent embellishments of it; — but above all memorable for the magnanimity of the prosecutor, who, though poor and dependent, and immersed in the duties of a toilsome calling, supplied the money, the leisure, the perseverance, and the learning, required for this great controversy — who, wholly forgetting himself in his object, had studiously concealed his connection with it, lest, perchance, a name so lowly should prejudice a cause so momentous — who, denying himself even the indulgence of attending the argument he had provoked, had circulated his own researches in the name, and as the work, of a plagiarist who had republished them — and who, mean as was his education, and humble as were his pursuits, had proved his superiority as a Jurist, on one main branch of the law of England, to some of the most illustrious Judges by whom that law had been administered.

Never was abolitionist more scathless than Granville Sharpe by the reproach to which their tribe has been exposed, of insensibility to all human sorrows, unless the hair of the sufferer be thick as wool, and the skin as black as ebony. His African clients may indeed have usurped a larger share of his attachment than the others; and of his countless schemes of beneficence, that which he loved the best was the settlement at Sierra Leone of a free colony, to serve as a *point-*

d'appui in the future campaigns against the slave trade. But he may be quoted as an experimental proof of the infinite divisibility of the kindly affections. Much he wrote, and much he laboured, to conciliate Great Britain and America; much to promote the diffusion of the Holy Scriptures; much to interpret the prophecies contained in them; much to refute the errors of the Socinians; much to sustain the cause of Grattan and the Irish volunteers; much to recommend reform in parliament; and much, it must be added, (for what is man in his best estate?) to dissuade the emancipation of the Catholics. Many also were the benevolent societies which he formed or fostered; and his publications, who can number? Their common aim was to advance the highest interests of mankind; but to none of them, with perhaps one exception, could the praise either of learning or of originality be justly given. For he possessed rather a great soul than a great understanding; and was less admirable for the extent of his resources, than for the earnest affection and the quiet energy with which he employed them.

Like all men of that cast of mind, his humour was gay and festive. Among the barges which floated on a summer evening by the villa of Pope, and the chateau of Horace Walpole, none was more constant or more joyous than that in which Granville Sharpe's harp or kettle-drum sustained the flute of one brother, the hautboy of another, and the melodious voices of their sisters. It was a concord of sweet sounds, typical, as it might seem, of the fraternal harmony which blessed their dwelling on the banks of that noble river. Much honest mirth gladdened that affectionate circle, and brother Granville's pencil could produce very passable caricatures when he laid aside

his harp, fashioned, as he maintained, in exact imitation of that of the son of Jesse. To complete the resemblance, it was his delight, at the break of day, to sing to it one of the songs of Zion in his chamber — raised by many an intervening staircase far above the Temple gardens, where young students of those times would often pause in their morning stroll, to listen to the not unpleasing cadence, though the voice was broken by age, and the language was to them an unknown tongue.

On one of their number he condescended to bestow a regard, the memory of which would still warm the heart, even were it chilled by as many years as had then blanched that venerable head. The one might have passed for the grandson of the other; but they met with mutual pleasure, and conversed with a confidence not unlike that of equals. And yet, at this period, Granville Sharpe was passing into a state which, in a nature less active and benevolent than his, would have been nothing better than dotage. In him it assumed the form of a delirium, so calm, so busy, and giving birth to whims so kind-hearted, as often to remind his young associate of Isaac Walton's saying, that the very dreams of a good man are acceptable to God. To illustrate by examples the state of a mind thus hovering on the confines of wisdom and fatuity, may perhaps suggest the suspicion that the old man's infirmities were contagious; but even at that risk they shall be hazarded; for few of the incidents of his more vigorous days delineate him so truly.

William Henry, the last Duke of Gloucester, (who possessed many virtues, and even considerable talents, which his feeble talk and manners concealed from his occasional associates,) had a great love for Granville

Sharpe; and nothing could be more amiable than the intercourse between them, though the one could never for a moment forget that he was a prince of the blood-royal, and the other never for a moment remembered that he was bred up as a linen-draper's apprentice. Beneath the pompous bearing of the Guelph lay a basis of genuine humility, and the free carriage of the ex-clerk of Ordnance was but the natural expression of a lowliness unembarrassed by any desire of praise or dread of failure. A little too gracious, perhaps, yet full of benignity, was the aspect and the attitude of the Duke, when, at one of the many philanthropic assemblages held under his presidency, Granville Sharpe (it was no common occurrence) rose, and requested leave to speak. He had, he said, two schemes, which, if recommended by such advocates, must greatly reduce the sum of human misery. To bring to a close the calamities of Sierra Leone, he had prepared a law for introducing there King Alfred's frank pledge, a sovereign remedy for all such social wounds. At once to diminish the waste of human life in the Peninsula, and to aid the depressed workmen in England, he had devised a project for manufacturing portable woolpacks; under the shelter of which ever-ready intrenchments, our troops might, without the least danger to themselves, mow down the ranks of the oppressors of Spain.

A politician, as well as a strategist, he sought and obtained an interview with Charles Fox, to whom he had advice of great urgency to give for conducting the affairs of Europe. If the ghost of Burke had appeared to lecture him, Fox could hardly have listened with greater astonishment, as his monitor, by the aid of the Little Horn in Daniel, explained the future policy of Napoleon and of the Czar. 'The Little

Horn! Mr. Sharpe,' at length exclaimed the most amiable of men, 'what in the name of wonder do you mean by the Little Horn?' 'See there,' said the dejected interpreter of prophecy to his companion, as they retired from the Foreign Office—'See there the fallacy of reputation! Why, that man passes for a statesman; and yet it is evident to me that he never before so much as heard of the Little Horn!'

As his end drew nearer, he became less and less capable of seizing the distinction between the prophecies and the newspapers. It rained as heavily on the 18th of February 1813, as on the afternoon when Isaac Walton met the future Bishop of Worcester at Bunhill Row, and found, in the public-house which gave them shelter, that double blessing of good ale and good discourse which he has so piously commemorated. Not such is the fortune of the young Templar, who, in a storm at least as pitiless, met Granville Sharpe at the later epoch moving down Long Acre as nimbly as ever, with his calm thoughtful countenance raised gently upwards, as was usual with him—as though gazing on some object which it pleased him well to look upon. But his discourse, though delivered in a kind of shower-bath, to which his reverie made him insensible, was as characteristic, if not as wise, as that of the learned Sanderson. 'You have heard,' he began, 'my young friend, of this scandalous proceeding of the Rabbi Ben Mendoli? No? Why, then, read this brief account of it which I have been publishing. About a year ago the Rabbi, being then at Damascus, saw a great flame descend, and rest on one of the hills which surround the city. Soon after, he came to Gibraltar. There he discovered how completely that celestial phenomenon

verified my interpretation of the words — "Arise, shine, for thy light is come," &c.; and now he has the audacity not only to deny that he ever saw such a flame, but to declare that he never pretended to have seen it. Can you imagine a clearer fulfilment of the predicted blindness and obduracy of Israel before their restoration?'

That great event was to have taken place within a few months, when the still more awful event which happens to all living, removed this aged servant of God and man from the world of shadows to the world of light. To die at the precise moment when the vast prophetic drama was just reaching its sublime catastrophe, was a trial not easily borne, even by a faith so immovable as his. But death had no other sting for him. It awakened his pure spirit from the dreams which peopled it during the decay of his fleshy tabernacle; and if that change revealed to him that he had ill-interpreted many of the hard sentences of old, it gave him the assurance that he had well divined the meaning of one immutable prophecy — the prophecy of a gracious welcome and an eternal reward to those who, discerning the brethren of their Redeemer in the hungry, the thirsty, the stranger, the naked, the sick, and the prisoner, should for His sake feed, and shelter, and clothe, and visit, and comfort them.

United in the bonds of that Christian charity, though wide as the poles asunder in theological opinions, were Granville Sharpe and William Smith; that other denizen of Clapham who has already crossed our path. He lived as if to show how much of the coarser duties of this busy world may be undertaken by a man of quick sensibility, without impairing the finer sense of the beautiful in nature and in art; and

as if to prove how much a man of ardent benevolence may enjoy of this world's happiness, without any steeling of the heart to the wants and the calamities of others. When he had nearly completed fourscore years, he could still gratefully acknowledge that he had no remembrance of any bodily pain or illness; and that of the very numerous family of which he was the head, every member still lived to support and to gladden his old age. And yet, if he had gone mourning all his days, he could scarcely have acquired a more tender pity for the miserable, or have laboured more habitually for their relief. It was his ill fortune to provoke the invective of Robert Southey, and the posthumous sneers of Walter Scott — the one resenting a too well merited reproach, the other indulging that hate of Whigs and Whiggery which, in that great mind, was sometimes stronger than the love of justice. The enmity even of such men he, however, might well endure, who possessed, not merely the attachment and confidence of Charles Fox and his followers, but the almost brotherly love of William Wilberforce, of Granville Sharpe, and of Thomas Clarkson. Of all their fellow labourers, there was none more devoted to their cause, or whom they more entirely trusted. They, indeed, were all to a man *homo-ousians*, and he a disciple of Belsham. But they judged that many an erroneous opinion respecting the Redeemer's person would not deprive of His gracious approbation, and ought not to exclude from their own affectionate regards, a man in whom they daily saw a transcript, however imperfect, of the Redeemer's mercy and beneficence.

Thirty-seven years have rolled away since these men met at Clapham in joy, and thanksgiving, and mutual gratulation, over the abolition of the African

slave trade. It was still either the dwelling-place, or the haunt, of almost every one of the more eminent supporters of that measure; and it may be that they exulted beyond the limits of sober reason in the prospects which that success had opened to them. Time has brought to light more than they knew or believed of the inveteracy of the evil; and of the impotency of law in a protracted contest with avarice. But time has also ascertained, that throughout the period assigned for the birth and death of a whole generation of mankind, there has been no proof, or reasonable suspicion, of so much as a single evasion of this law in any one of the transatlantic British colonies. Time has shown that to that law we may now confidently ascribe the deliverance of our own land from this blood-guiltiness for ever. Time has ascertained that the solemn practical assertion then made of the great principles of justice, was to be prolific of consequences, direct and indirect, of boundless magnitude. Time has enlisted on our side all the powers and all the suffrages of the earth; so that no one any longer attempts to erase the brand of murder from the brow of the slave-trader. Above all, time has shown that, in the extinction of the slave trade, was involved, by slow but inevitable steps, the extinction of the slavery which it had created and sustained. This, also, was a result of which, as far as human agency is concerned, the mainsprings are to be found among that sect to which, having first given a name, we would now build up a monument.

It is with a trembling hand that we inscribe on that monument the name of Zachary Macaulay; for it is not without some misgiving lest pain should be inflicted on the living, while we pass, however reverently, over the half-extinguished ashes of the dead.

The bosom shrines, erected in remembrance of them, may be yet more intolerably profaned by rude eulogy than by unmerited reproach; and the danger of such profanation is the more imminent, when the judgment, though unbiassed by any ties of consanguinity, is not exempt from influences almost as kindly and as powerful. It is, however, an attempt which he who would write the sectarian history of Clapham could not wholly decline, without an error like that of omitting the name of Grotius in a sectarian history of the Arminians.

A few paces apart from each other, in the church of Westminster, are three monuments, to which, in God's appointed time, will be added a fourth, to complete the sepulchral honours of those to whom our remotest posterity will ascribe the deliverance of mankind from the woes of the African slave trade, and of colonial slavery. There is a yet more enduring temple, where, engraven by no human hands, abides a record, to be divulged in its season, of services to that cause, worthy to be commemorated with those of William Wilberforce, of Granville Sharpe, of Zachary Macaulay, and of Thomas Clarkson. But to that goodly fellowship the praise will be emphatically given. Thomas Clarkson is his own biographer, and pious hands have celebrated the labours of two of his colleagues. Of Mr. Macaulay no memorial has been made public, excepting that which has been engraved on his tomb in Westminster Abbey, by some eulogist less skilful than affectionate. It is no remediless omission; although it would require talents of the highest order, to exhibit a distinct and faithful image of a man whose peculiarity it was to conceal, as far as possible, his interior life, under the veil of his outward appearance. That his understanding was proof against

sophistry, and his nerves against fear, were, indeed, conclusions to which a stranger arrived at the first interview with him. But what might be suggesting that expression of countenance, at once so earnest and so monotonous — by what manner of feelings those gestures, so uniformly firm and deliberate, were prompted — whence the constant traces of fatigue on those overhanging brows, and on that athletic though ungraceful figure — what might be the charm which excited amongst his chosen circle a faith approaching to superstition, and a love rising to enthusiasm, towards a man whose demeanour was so inanimate, if not austere? — it was a riddle of which neither Gall nor Lavater could have found the key. That much was passing within, which that ineloquent tongue and those taciturn features could not utter; that nature had compensated her other bounties by refusing him the means of a ready interchange of thought; and that he had won, without knowing how to court, the attachment of all who approached him closely — these were discoveries which the most casual acquaintance might make, but which they whom he honoured with his intimacy, and they alone, could explain.

To them he appeared a man possessed by one idea, and animated by one master passion — an idea so comprehensive, as to impart a profound interest to all which indicated its influence over him — a passion so benevolent, that the coldest heart could not withhold some sympathy from him who was the subject of it. Trained in the hardy habits of Scotland in ancient times, he had received from his father much instruction in theology, with some Latin and a little Greek, when not employed in cultivating his father's glebe at Cardross, on the northern bank of

Clyde. While yet a boy, he had watched as the iron entered into the soul of the slaves, whose labours he was sent to superintend in Jamaica; and, abandoning with abhorrence a pursuit which had promised him early wealth and distinction, he pondered the question — how shall the earth be delivered from this curse? Turning to Sierra Leone, he braved for many years that deadly climate, that he might aid in the erection and in the defence of what was then the one city of refuge for the Negro race; and as he saw the slave trade crushing to the dust the adjacent tribes of Africa, he again pondered the question — how shall the earth be delivered from this curse?

That God had called him into being to wage war with this gigantic evil, became his immutable conviction. During forty successive years, he was ever burdened with this thought. It was the subject of his visions by day, and of his dreams by night. To give them reality, he laboured as men labour for the honours of a profession, or for the subsistence of their children. The rising sun ever found him at his task. He went abroad but to advance it. His commerce, his studies, his friendships, his controversies, even his discourse in the bosom of his family, were all bent to the promotion of it. He edited voluminous periodical works; but whether theology, literature, or politics were the text, the design was still the same — to train the public mind to a detestation of the slave trade and of slavery. He attached himself to most of the religious and philanthropic societies of his age, that he might enlist them as associates, more or less declared, in his holy war. To multiply such allies, he called into existence one great association, and contributed largely to the es-

tablishment of another. In that service he sacrificed all that man may lawfully sacrifice — health, fortune, repose, favour, and celebrity. He died a poor man, though wealth was within his reach. He pursued the contest to the end, though oppressed by such pains of body as strained to their utmost tension the self-sustaining powers of the soul. He devoted himself to the severest toil, amidst allurements to luxuriate in the delights of domestic and social intercourse, such as few indeed can have encountered. He silently permitted some to usurp his hardly-earned honours, that no selfish controversy might desecrate their common cause. He made no effort to obtain the praises of the world, though he had talents to command, and a temper peculiarly disposed to enjoy them. He drew on himself the poisoned shafts of calumny; and, while feeling their sting as generous spirits alone can feel it, never turned a single step aside from his path to propitiate or to crush the slanderers.

They have long since fallen, or are soon to fall into unhonoured graves. His memory will be ever dear to those who hate injustice, and revere the unostentatious consecration of a long life to the deliverance of the oppressed. It will be especially dear to the few who closely observed, and who can yet remember how that self-devotion became the poetical element of a mind not naturally imaginative; what deep significance it imparted to an aspect and a demeanour not otherwise impressive; what energy to a temper, which, if not so excited, might perhaps have been phlegmatic; what unity of design to a mind constitutionally discursive; and what dignity even to physical languor and suffering, contracted in such a service. They can never forget that the most im-

placable enemy of the tyrants of the plantation and of the slave ship, was the most indulgent and generous and constant of friends; that he spurned, as men should spurn, the mere pageantry of life, that he might use, as men should use, the means which life affords of advancing the happiness of mankind; that his earthward affections, active and all-enduring as they were, could yet thrive without the support of human sympathy, because they were sustained by so abiding a sense of the Divine presence, and so absolute a submission to the Divine will, as raised him habitually to that higher region, where the reproach of man could not reach, and the praise of man might not presume to follow him.

Although, to repeat a mournful acknowledgment, the tent of Thomas Clarkson was pitched elsewhere, yet throughout the slave trade abolition war, the other chiefs who hailed him as the earliest, and as among the mightiest of their host, kept their communications open by encamping in immediate vicinity to each other. Even to Lord Brougham the same station may, with poetical truth at least, be assigned by the Homer who shall hereafter sing these battles; for though, at that period, his London domicile was in the walks of the Inner Temple, yet might he not seldom be encountered in the less inviting walks which led him to the suburban councils of his brethren in command. There he formed or cemented attachments, of which no subsequent elevation of rank, or intoxicating triumph of genius, or agony of political strife, have ever rendered him forgetful. Of one of those denizens of Clapham he has published a sketch, of which we avail ourselves, not as subscribing altogether to the accuracy of it, but as we can thus fill up, from the hand of so great a Master, a

part of our canvass which must have otherwise remained blank and colourless.

'Mr. Stephen was a person of great natural talents, which, if accidental circumstances had permitted him fully to cultivate, and early enough to bring into play upon the best scene of political exertion — the House of Commons, would have placed him high in the first rank of English orators. For he had, in an eminent degree, that strenuous firmness of purpose and glowing ardour of soul, which lies at the root of all eloquence; he was gifted with great industry, a retentive memory, an ingenuity which was rather apt to err by excess than by defect. His imagination was, besides, lively and powerful; little, certainly, under the chastening discipline of severe taste, but often enabling him to embody his own feelings and recollections with great distinctness of outline, and strength of colouring. He enjoyed, moreover, great natural strength of constitution, and had as much courage as falls to the lot of most men. But having passed the most active part of his life in one of the West Indian colonies, where he followed the profession of a barrister, and having, after his return, addicted himself to the practice of a court which affords no scope at all for oratorical display, it happened to him, as it has to many other men of natural genius for rhetorical pursuits, that he neither gained the correct taste which the habit of frequenting refined society, and above all, addressing a refined auditory, can alone bestow, nor acquired the power of condensation, which is sure to be lost altogether by those who address hearers compelled to listen, like judges and juries, instead of having to retain them by closeness of reasoning, or felicity of illustration. * * * * * * * * * * * It must

have struck all who heard him when, early in 1808, he entered Parliament under the auspices of Mr. Perceval, that whatever defects he had, arose entirely from accidental circumstances, and not at all from intrinsic imperfections; nor could any one doubt that his late entrance upon parliamentary life, and his vehemence of temperament, alone kept him from the front rank of debaters, if not of eloquence itself. With Mr. Perceval, his friendship had been long and intimate. To this the similarity of their religious character mainly contributed; for Mr. Stephen was a distinguished member of the evangelical party to which the minister manifestly leant without belonging to it; and he was one whose pious sentiments and devotional habits occupied a very marked place in his whole scheme of life. No man has, however, a right to question, be it ever so slightly, his perfect sincerity. To this his blameless life bore the most irrefragable testimony. A warm and steady friend — a man of the strictest integrity and nicest sense of both honour and justice — in all the relations of private society wholly without a stain — though envy might well find whereon to perch, malice itself, in the exasperating discords of religious and civil controversy, never could descry a spot on which to fasten. Let us add the bright praise, and which sets at nought all lesser defects of mere taste, had he lived to read these latter lines, he would infinitely rather have had this sketch stained with all the darker shades of its critical matter, than been exalted, without these latter lines, to the level of Demosthenes or of Chatham, praised as the first of orators, or followed as the most brilliant of statesmen. His opinions upon political questions were clear and decided, taken up with the boldness, felt with the

ardour, asserted with the determination, which marked his zealous and uncompromising spirit. Of all subjects, that of the slave trade and slavery most engrossed his mind. His experience in the West Indies, his religious feelings, and his near connexion with Mr. Wilberforce, whose sister he married, all contributed to give this great question a peculiarly sacred aspect in his eyes; nor could he either avoid mixing it up with almost all other discussions, or prevent his views of its various relations from influencing his sentiments on other matters of political discussion.' *

The author of the preceding portrait enjoyed the happiness denied to the subject of it, not merely of witnessing, but of largely participating in, the last great act by which the labours borne by them in common, during so many preceding years, were consummated. It was a still more rare bounty of Providence, which reserved the abolition of slavery throughout the British Empire as a triumph for the statesman who, twenty-seven years before, had introduced into the House of Commons the first great act of tardy reparation to Africa. Crowned with honour and with length of days, to Lord Grey it has further been given, by the same benignant power, to watch, in the calm evening of life, the issues of the works of justice and of mercy which God raised him up to accomplish. With the evil omens, and with the too glowing anticipations of former times, he has been able to contrast the actual solution of this great practical enigma. He has lived to witness eleven years of unbroken tranquillity throughout countries, where, till then, a single year undisturbed by insurrection was almost unknown — the extinction of feuds

* Speeches of Henry Lord Brougham, vol. i. pp. 402–405.

apparently irreconcilable — positions full of danger in former wars, now converted into bulwarks of our national power — an equal administration of justice in the land of the slave-courts and the cart-whip — a loyal and happy peasantry, where the soil was so lately broken by the sullen hands of slaves — penury exchanged for abundance — a population, once cursed by a constant and rapid decay, now progressively increasing — Christian knowledge and Christian worship universally diffused among a people so lately debased by Pagan superstitions — and the conjugal duties, with all their attendant charities, held in due honour by those to whom laws, written in the English language, and sanctioned by the Kings of England, had forbidden even the marriage vow. If, with these blessings, have also come diminished harvests of the cane and the coffee plant, even they who think that to export and to import are the two great ends of the social existence of mankind, have before them a bright and not very distant futurity. But he, under whose auspices the heavy yoke was at length broken, is contemplating, doubtless, with other and far higher thoughts, the interests of the world, from which, at no remote period, the inexorable law of our existence must summon him away. In that prospect, so full of awe to the wisest and the best, he may well rejoice in the remembrance that, in conferring on him the capacity to discern, and the heart to obey the supreme and immutable will, God enabled him to grasp the only clue by which the rulers of the world can be safely guided amidst the darkness and the intricacy of human affairs.

Such at least is the doctrine which, if Clapham could have claimed him for her own, Clapham would have instilled into that great Minister of the British

Crown, to whom, more than to any other, she was prompt to offer her allegiance. Politics, however, in that microcosm, were rather cosmopolitan than national. Every human interest had its guardian, every region of the globe its representative. If the African continent and the Charibbean Archipelago were assigned to an indefatigable protectorate, New Holland was not forgotten, nor was British India without a patron. It was the special charge of Mr. Grant, better known to the present generation by the celebrity of his sons, but regarded at the commencement of this century as the real ruler of the rulers of the East, the Director of the Court of Directors. At Leadenhall Street he was celebrated for an integrity exercised by the severest trials; for an understanding large enough to embrace, without confusion, the entire range and the intricate combinations of their whole civil and military policy; and for nerves which set fatigue at defiance. At Clapham, his place of abode, he was hailed as a man whose piety, though ever active, was too profound for much speech; a praise to which, among their other glories, it was permitted to few of his neighbours there to attain or to aspire. With the calm dignity of those spacious brows, and of that stately figure, it seemed impossible to reconcile the movement of any passion less pure than that which continually urged him to requite the tribute of India by a treasure, of which he who possessed it more largely than any other of the sons of men, has declared, that 'the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold.' No less elevated topic (so judged the inquisitive vicinage) could be the subject of his discourse, as he traversed their gorse-covered common, attended by a youth, who, but for the fire

of his eye, and the occasional energy of his bearing, might have passed for some studious and sickly competitor for medals and prize poems. If such were the pursuits ascribed by Clapham to her occasional visitant, it is but a proof that even 'patent Christianity' is no effectual safeguard against human fallibility.

Towards the middle of the last century, John Martyn of Truro was working with his hands in the mines near that town. He was a wise man, who, knowing the right use of leisure hours, employed them so as to qualify himself for higher and more lucrative pursuits; and who, knowing the right use of money, devoted his enlarged means to procure for his four children a liberal education. Henry, the younger of his sons, was accordingly entered at the University of Cambridge, where, in January 1801, he obtained the degree of bachelor of arts, with the honorary rank of senior wrangler. There also he became the disciple, and as he himself would have said, the convert of Charles Simeon. Under the counsels of that eminent teacher, the guidance of Mr. Wilberforce, and the active aid of Mr. Grant, he entered the East India Company's service as a chaplain. After a residence in Hindostan of about five years, he returned homewards through Persia in broken health. Pausing at Shiraz, he laboured there during twelve months with the ardour of a man, who, distinctly perceiving the near approach of death, feared lest it should intercept the great work for which alone he desired to live. That work (the translation of the New Testament into Persian) at length accomplished, he resumed his way towards Constantinople, following his Mihmander (one Hassan Aga) at a gallop, nearly the whole distance from

Tabriz to Tocat, under the rays of a burning sun, and the pressure of continual fever. On the 6th of October 1812, in the thirty-second year of his age, he brought the Journal of his life to a premature close, by inscribing in it the following words, while he sought a momentary repose under the shadow of some trees at the foot of the Caramanian mountains: 'I sat in the orchard, and thought with sweet comfort and fear of God — in solitude, my company, my friend, and comforter. Oh, when shall time give place to eternity! When shall appear that new heaven and new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness and love! There shall in nowise enter anything that defileth; none of that wickedness which has made man worse than wild beasts; none of those corruptions which add still more to the miseries of mortality, shall be seen or heard of any more.' Ten days afterwards those aspirations were fulfilled. His body was laid in the grave by the hands of strangers at Tocat, and to his disembodied spirit was revealed that awful vision, which it is given to the pure in heart, and to them alone, to contemplate.

Amidst all the discords which agitate the Church of England, her sons are unanimous in extolling the name of Henry Martyn. And with reason; for it is in fact the one heroic name which adorns her annals from the days of Elizabeth to our own. Her apostolic men, the Wesleys and Elliotts and Brainerds of other times, either quitted, or were cast out of her communion. Her *Acta Sanctorum* may be read from end to end with a dry eye and an unquickened pulse. Henry Martyn, the learned and the holy, translating the Scriptures in his solitary bungalow at Dinapore, or preaching to a congregation of five hundred beggars, or refuting the Mahommedan doctors at Shiraz,

is the bright exception. It is not the less bright, because he was brought within the sphere of those secular influences which so often draw down our Anglican worthies from the Empyrean along which they would soar, to the levels, flat though fertile, on which they must depasture. There is no concealing the fact, that he annually received from the East India Company an ugly allowance of twelve hundred pounds; and though he would be neither just nor prudent who should ascribe to the attractive force of that stipend one hour of Henry Martyn's residence in the East, yet the ideal would be better without it. Oppressively conclusive as may be the arguments in favour of a well-endowed and punctually paid 'Establishment,' they have, after all, an unpleasant earthly savour. One would not like to discover that Polycarp, or Bernard, or Boniface, was waited on every quarter-day by a plump bag of coin from the public treasury. To receive a thousand rupees monthly from that source, was perhaps the duty, it certainly was not the fault, of Henry Martyn. Yet it was a misfortune, and had been better avoided if possible.

When Mackenzie was sketching his *Man of Feeling*, he could have desired no better model than Henry Martyn, the young and successful competitor for academical honours; a man born to love with ardour and to hate with vehemence; amorous, irascible, ambitious, and vain; without one torpid nerve about him; aiming at universal excellence in science, in literature, in conversation, in horsemanship, and even in dress; not without some gay fancies, but more prone to austere and melancholy thoughts; patient of the most toilsome inquiries, though not wooing philosophy for her own sake; animated by the poetical temperament, though unvisited by any poetical in-

spiration; eager for enterprise, though thinking meanly of the rewards to which the adventurous aspire; uniting in himself, though as yet unable to concentrate or to harmonise them, many keen desires, many high powers, and much constitutional dejection — the chaotic materials of a great character, destined to combine, as the future events of life should determine, into no common forms, whether of beauty and delight, or of deformity and terror.

Among those events, the most momentous was his connection with Charles Simeon, and with such of his disciples as sought learning at Cambridge, and learned leisure at Clapham. A mind so beset by sympathies of every other kind, could not but be peculiarly susceptible to the contagion of opinion. From that circle he adopted, in all its unadorned simplicity, the system called Evangelical — that system of which (if Augustine, Luther, Calvin, Knox, and the writers of the English Homilies may be credited) Christ himself was the author, and Paul the first and greatest interpreter.

Through shallow heads and voluble tongues, such a creed (or indeed any creed) filtrates so easily, that, of the multitude who maintain it, comparatively few are aware of the conflict of their faith with the natural and unaided reason of mankind. Indeed he who makes such an avowal will hardly escape the charge of affectation or of impiety. Yet if any truth be clearly revealed, it is, that the apostolic doctrine was foolishness to the sages of this world. If any unrevealed truth be indisputable, it is, that such sages are, at this day, making, as they have ever made, ill-disguised efforts to escape the inferences with which their own subscriptions or admissions teem. Divine philosophy divorced from human science — celestial things

stripped of the mitigating veils woven by man's wit and fancy to relieve them — form an abyss as impassable at Oxford now, as it was at Athens eighteen centuries ago. To Henry Martyn the gulf was visible, the self-renunciation painful, the victory complete. His understanding embraced, and his heart reposed in the two comprehensive and ever germinating tenets of the school in which he studied. Regarding his own heart as corrupt, and his own reason as delusive, he exercised an unlimited affiance in the holiness and the wisdom of Him, in whose person the divine nature had been allied to the human, that so, in the persons of his followers, the human might be allied to the divine.

Such was his religious theory — a theory which doctors may combat, or admit, or qualify, but in which the readers of Henry Martyn's biography, letters, and journals, cannot but acknowledge that he found the resting-place of all the impetuous appetencies of his mind, the spring of all his strange powers of activity and endurance. Prostrating his soul before the real, though the hidden, Presence he adored, his doubts were silenced, his anxieties soothed, and every meaner passion hushed into repose. He pursued divine truth, (as all who would succeed in that pursuit must pursue it,) by the will rather than the understanding; by sincerely and earnestly searching out the light which had come into the world, by still going after it when perceived, by following its slightest intimations with faith, with resignation, and with constancy; though the path it disclosed led him from the friends and the home of his youth, across wide oceans and burning deserts, amidst contumely and contention, with a wasted frame and an overburdened spirit. He rose to the sublime in character, neither by the powers of his intellect, nor by the compass of

his learning, nor by the subtlety, the range, or the beauty of his conceptions, (for in all these he was surpassed by many,) but by the copiousness and the force of the living fountains by which his spiritual life was nourished. Estranged from a world once too fondly loved, his well-tutored heart learned to look back with a calm though affectionate melancholy on its most bitter privations. Insatiable in the thirst for freedom, holiness, and peace, he maintained an ardour of devotion which might have passed for an erotic delirium, when contrasted with the Sadducean frigidity of other worshippers. Regarding all the members of the great human family as his kindred in sorrow and in exile, his zeal for their welfare partook more of the fervour of domestic affection, than of the kind but gentle warmth of a diffusive philanthropy. Elevated in his own esteem by the consciousness of an intimate union with the Eternal Source of all virtue, the meek missionary of the cross exhibited no obscure resemblance to the unobtrusive dignity, the unfaltering purpose, and the indestructible composure of Him by whom the cross was borne. The ill-disciplined desires of youth, now confined within one deep channel, flowed quickly onward towards one great consummation; nor was there any faculty of his soul, or any treasure of his accumulated knowledge, for which appropriate exercise was not found in the high enterprise to which he was devoted.

And yet nature, the great leveller, still asserting her rights even against those whose triumph over her might seem the most perfect, would not seldom extort a burst of passionate grief from the bosom of the holy Henry Martyn, when memory recalled the image of her to whom, in earlier days, the homage of his heart had been rendered. The writer of his life,

embarrassed with the task of reconciling such an episode to the gravity befitting a hero so majestic, and a biography so solemn, has concealed this passage of his story beneath a veil, at once transparent enough to excite, and impervious enough to baffle, curiosity. A form may be dimly distinguished of such witchery as to have subdued at the first interview, if not at the first casual glance, a spirit soaring above all the other attractions of this sublunary sphere. We can faintly trace the pathway, not always solitary, of the pious damsel, as she crossed the bare heaths of Cornwall on some errand of mercy, and listened, not unmoved, to a tremulous voice, pointing to those heights of devotion from which the speaker had descended to this lower worship. Then the shifting scene presents the figure—alas! so common—of a mother, prudent and inexorable, as if she had been involved in no romance of her own some brief twenty years before; and then appears the form (deliciously out of place) of the apostolic Charles Simeon, assuming, but assuming in vain, the tender intervenient office. In sickness and in sorrow, in watchings and in fastings, in toils and perils, and amidst the decay of all other earthly hopes, this human love blends so touchingly with his diviner enthusiasm, that even from the life of Henry Martyn there can scarcely be drawn a more valuable truth, than that, in minds pure as his, there may dwell together in most harmonious concord, affections which a coarse, low-toned, ascetic morality, would describe as distracting the heart between earth and heaven.

Yet it is a life pregnant with many other weighty truths. It was passed in an age when men whom genius itself could scarcely rescue from abhorrence, found in their constitutional sadness, real or fictitious,

not merely an excuse for grovelling in the stye of Epicurus, but even an apology for deifying their sensuality, pride, malignity, and worldly-mindedness, by hymns due only to those sacred influences, by which our better nature is sustained, in the warfare with its antagonist corruptions. Not such the gloom which brooded over the heart of Henry Martyn. It solicited no sympathy, was never betrayed into sullenness, and sought no unhallowed consolation. It assumed the form of a depressing consciousness of ill desert; mixed with fervent compassion for a world which he at once longed to quit, and panted to improve. It was the sadness of an exile gazing wistfully towards his distant home, even while soothing the grief of his brethren in captivity. It was a sadness akin to that which stole over the heart of his Master, while, pausing on the slope of the hills which stand round about Jerusalem, he wept over her crowded marts and cloud-capped pinnacles, hastening to a desolation already visible to that prescient eye; though hidden by the glare and tumult of life from the obdurate multitude below. It was a sadness soon to give place to an abiding serenity in the presence of that compassionate Being who had condescended to shed many bitter tears, that he might wipe away every tear from the eyes of his faithful followers.

Tidings of the death of Henry Martyn reached England during the Parliamentary debates on the renewal of the East India Company's charter; and gave new impetus to the zeal with which the friends and patrons of his youth were then contending for the establishment of an Episcopal see at Calcutta, and for the removal of all restraints on the diffusion of Christianity within its limits. In the roll of names most distinguished in that conflict, scarcely one can be

found which does not also grace the calendar of Clapham. It was a cause emphatically Claphamic. John Venn, to whom the whole sect looked up as their pastor and spiritual guide, was at that time on his deathbed. He had been the projector, and one of the original founders, of the society for sending missionaries of the Anglican communion to Africa and the East — a body which, under the name of the 'Church Missionary Society,' now commands a wider field of action, and a more princely revenue, than any Protestant association of the same character. To him who prompted the deeper meditations, partook the counsels, and stimulated the efforts of such disciples, some memorial should have been raised by a Church which to him, more than to any of her sons, is indebted for her most effective instrument for propagating her tenets and enlarging her borders. But, linked though that name was to the kindest and the holiest thoughts of so many of the wise and good, it must be passed over in this place with this transient notice; lest the reverence due to it should be impaired, as it certainly could not be strengthened, by a tribute on which might not unjustly rest some grave suspicion of partiality.

The shepherd was taken from his flock immediately after the success of the Parliamentary contest, and while their exultations, and the forebodings of their opponents, predicted the glorious, or the disastrous, results of Episcopacy, and of missions in India. At this distance of time, we know that these prophecies, whether of good or of evil, were uninspired. Neither Hindoos nor Musselmen have revolted on the discovery that their European sovereigns have a belief and a worship of their own, which they seriously prefer to the faith of Brama or of Mahomet. But neither

has Benares yet ceased to number her pilgrims by myriads; nor is the Rammadan violated from dawn to sunset. These results can hardly have surprised those who derived their anticipations of the future from a careful survey of the past.

The power before which the temples of pagan Rome fell down, (like the mighty agencies of the material creation,) is a silent, invisible influence, obedient to no laws which human wisdom can explore; though, at length, manifesting its reality in results which the dullest observation cannot overlook. It works by searching out affinities in the elements of man's moral and social nature; by separating such as are incongruous, and by combining the rest into organic forms, animated by a common life. It works by the repulsive force of mutual antipathies, and by the plastic force of self-denying love; and exhibits its presence in the Christian system, as in its noblest form, and most complete developement. And though the prolific energies of this renovating power may often appear to slumber, and though, even when roused into activity, it operates but slowly and imperfectly, yet is it the one vital principle of this otherwise corrupt and corrupting world; and is not less the source of light and of order now, than when it brooded over the dark primitive chaos.

Thus earth's history is but as some incoherent rhapsody of wild joys and maddening sorrows, if not regarded as the progressive fulfilment of the Supreme Will, effected by the ministry, sometimes spontaneous, at other times reluctant, of other wills subordinate to the Supreme. And that passage of history which is to unfold the religious and intellectual regeneration of Hindostan, will, like the rest, delineate the strife, the reverses, and the long delay, which must precede

and allay the final triumph. It will tell of men devoting themselves, in constancy and resignation, to labours of which they must never witness the recompense; and obeying every intimation of the good pleasure of God, even when He may have appeared to have abandoned to their own weakness the champions of His truth. It will trace the path of the heralds of peace, illuminated amidst the deep surrounding darkness by the inward light of faith, and by the outward light which the inspired records throw on the state, the prospects, and the duties of man. And it will also tell of the restoration of those records to the supremacy for which their Divine Author destined them, among his instruments for the renewal of the image which He impressed on His moral creation, at the first dawn of its existence.

To effect that restoration, became the chief design of the devout men whose wiser Anglo-Catholic sons are now calling their fathers fools. Of that folly the ecumenical seat was in the immediate vicinity of our suburban common, reflecting from her glassy pools the mansions by which she is begirt. From them came forth a majority of the first members of the governing body of the 'Bible Society,' its earliest ministers or secretaries, and, above all, the first and greatest of its Presidents — John Lord Teignmouth; to the commemoration of whose life are dedicated the volumes from which our devious course commenced, and to which it at length returns.

As Mr. Carlyle has it, he was a noticeable man. While Napoleon had been founding an Empire in Europe, he had been ruling an Empire in Asia. The greatest of commercial corporations had made him their viceroy. The greatest of religious societies had made him their head. He was a man of letters too,

and a man of hair-breadth escapes and strange adventures. He had been the friend of Sir William Jones, the associate of Warren Hastings, the adviser of Henry Dundas, and the choice of William Pitt when he had a trust to confer, superior in splendour, perhaps in importance, to his own. So, at least, said the chronicles of those times; but his own appearance seemed to say the contrary. If the *fasces* had really once been borne before the quiet, everyday looking gentleman who was to be seen walking with his children on Clapham Common, or holding petty sessions of the peace for the benefit of his neighbours there, then Clapham Common had totally misconceived what manner of men governors-general are. The idea of the common was as magnificent as that of a Lord Mayor in the mind of Martinus Scriblerus. But a glance at our Arungzebe, in the Clapham coach, was enough to dispel the illusion. How a man, who had sat on the Musnud of Calcutta, could now sit so patiently between Messrs. Smith and Brown of St. Mildred's, Cornhill, and listen to them on the Paving Rate Question, with such genuine and good-humoured interest, was a question which long exercised the faith and the tongues of the commoners, and which has ever since remained one of the dark problems of parochial history.

Lord Teignmouth was an estimable, accomplished, and religious man, on whom Providence bestowed extraordinary gifts of fortune, without any extraordinary gifts of nature. He was exalted to one of the highest places of the earth, but was not endowed with the genius or the magnanimity for which such places afford their meet exercise and full developement. The roll of British viceroys in India includes other names than those of the Immortals. Clive, Hastings, and Wellesley, transmitted empire, but

could not transmit imperial minds to Amherst, or to Minto, or to Shore. He was not one of those who enlarge our conceptions of the powers occasionally confided to man. He rose to the summit of delegated dominion, without any sublime endurance or heroic daring. He wrote many speculations, political, moral, and religious; but without rendering more clear our knowledge of the actual condition of mankind; or our conjectures respecting what awaits them. He also wrote many verses; but can scarcely ever have awakened an echo in the hearts of others. The eminence of his position suggested comparisons which it would otherwise have been unmeaning to form. There is not room for many great men, in any age or in any dynasty; and he who, in the age of Napoleon and the dynasty of Clive, ruled with spotless virtue, and aimed only to consolidate the conquests of his predecessors, might justly deprecate the disparaging remark, that he was not cast in their gigantic mould. But the good Vespasian must always be prepared for invidious allusions to the mighty Julius.

The son of a supercargo, and the grandson of a captain in the marine of the East India Company, John Shore was destined from his youth to the service of the same employers. He was prepared for it at Harrow, where he recited Homer and Juvenal with Nathanael Halhed on the one hand, and Richard Brinsley Sheridan on the other; Samuel Parr being the common tutor of the three. On the same form were seen, nearly forty years later, three other boys, since known to fame as Lord Byron, Sir Robert Peel, and Sir George Sinclair. In the first of these triumvirates Halhed, in the second Sinclair, were pointed out by Harrovian divination as the men destined to illuminate and command the ages which

had given them birth. The spirit of prophecy did not rest on the Hill of Harrow! Neither indeed was the United Company of Merchants, trading to the East Indies at the first of those eras, precisely a school of the prophets. The one qualification they required of the future ministers and judges of their Empire, was a sound acquaintance with book-keeping. Mr. Shore was accordingly removed from Harrow to a commercial school at Hackney. Among the students there, was one who, at the distance of half a century, he met again; the stately Marquis of Hastings, who then came to ask a lesson in the art of governing India, from the old schoolfellow with whom he had once taken lessons in the art of double entry.

Enthusiasts are men of one idea. Heroes are men of one design. They who prosper in the world are usually men of one maxim. When Mr. Shore was toiling up the steep ascent trodden by writers, 'an old gentleman named Burgess' chanced to say to him, 'make yourself useful, and you will succeed.' Old Mr. Burgess never said a better thing in his life. It became the text on which the young civilian preached many a discourse to others, and to himself. With his own hand he compiled several volumes of the records of the secret political department. In a single year, he decided six hundred causes at Moorshedabad. He acquired the Hindostanee, Arabic, and Persian tongues; and was summoned to employ that knowledge at what was then called the 'Provincial Council' at Calcutta. He revised one of the philippics launched by Francis against Warren Hastings, and lent his pen to prepare a memorial against the supreme court and Sir Elijah Impey. So useful indeed, did he make himself to the opponents of Hastings, that he was appointed by that great man

(oriental and occidental politics having much in common) to a seat in his supreme council of four. But, whatever might be his change of party, Mr. Shore never changed his maxim. He presided at the Board of Revenue. He acted as revenue commissioner in Dacca and Behar. He drew up plans of judicial reform. Ever busy, and ever useful, he remained in India till Hastings himself quitted it, when they returned in the same ship to England — the ever-triumphant Hastings to encounter Burke and the House of Commons; the ever-useful Mr. Shore to receive from the Court of Directors a seat in the supreme council of three, established under Mr. Pitt's India bill.

Again he bent his way to the East, and again enjoyed, under the rule of Lord Cornwallis, abundant opportunities of acting up to the precept of old Mr. Burgess. He sustained nearly all the drudgery which, in every such combination, falls to the lot of some single person; assuming, as his peculiar province, the settlement of the revenues of Bengal, Behar, and Orissa. The result of his labours was that momentous decision, remaining in force to this day, which has recognised the right of the Zemindars to the land, in the double character of renters and landlords — a measure against which there is such an array of authority and argument, as to compel a doubt whether, on this occasion at least, Mr. Shore did not render a service useful rather to the sovereigns of India, than to their subjects.

To himself the result was most important. The time had come when Mr. Pitt hoped to witness the introduction into India of the pacific system which, at his instance, parliament had enjoined. He committed that task to Mr. Shore; wisely judging that the author of the territorial settlement possessed in

an eminent degree the habits, the principles, and the temper, which qualify men for an unambitious and equitable course of policy. With that charge he sailed a third time for the East, in the character of Governor-General.

He had been eminently useful, and had succeeded eminently. But now the old maxim began to wear out. He who would climb an oak, must, as a great living writer has observed, change the nature of his efforts, and quicken his pace after he has once fairly set foot on the branches. Old Mr. Burgess had taught how the highest advancement might be obtained. He had not taught how it might be improved. Sir John Shore, (such was now the title of the Governor-General,) brought to that commanding station, knowledge, industry, courage, and disinterestedness; with a philanthropy as pure as ever warmed the bosom of any of the rulers of mankind. But he did not bring to it the wide survey, the prompt decision, and the invincible will, of the great statesmen who, before and after him, wielded that delegated sceptre. The sense of subordination, and the spirit of a subordinate, still clung to him. To be useful to the Board of Control, to be useful to the Court of Directors, to be useful to the Civil Service, to be useful to the Indian Army, limited his ambition as an administrator; and though the happiness of the nations of India was the object of his highest aspirations, his rule over them was barren, not only of any splendid enterprise, but even of any memorable plan for their benefit.

The four years of Sir John Shore's government was a period of peace, interrupted only by a single battle with the Rohilla chiefs. But it was a peace pregnant with wars, more costly and dangerous than any in which the British Empire in the East had been

involved since the days of Clive and Laurence. The charges advanced against Sir John Shore by the more adventurous spirits who followed him, are all summed up in the one accusation — that his policy was temporising and timid. He acquiesced as an inert spectator in the successful invasion of the dominions of the Nizam by the Mahrattas. He fostered the power and the audacity of that warlike nation. He unresistingly permitted the growth of a French subsidiary force, in the service of three of the most considerable native powers. He thwarted Lord Hobart's efforts for extending the dominion or influence of Great Britain in Ceylon, in the Carnatic, and in Tanjore. He allowed the growth and the aggressions in Northern India of that power which, under Runjeet Singh, afterwards became so formidable. He looked on passively while Tippoo was preparing for the contest into which he plunged, or was driven, to his own ruin, and to our no light peril.

These, and such as these, are the charges. The answer is drawn from the pacific injunctions of Parliament, and the pacific orders of the Company; and from the great truth, that ambitious wars are the direst curse, and peace the most invaluable blessing to mankind. In the course of his correspondence, Lord Teignmouth takes frequent occasion to announce the new or philosophical maxim, which as Governor-General he had substituted for his old, or utilitarian, maxim as a writer. It was that incontrovertible verity, that 'honesty is the best policy.' Sound doctrine, doubtless; but whether it is the best policy to be honest now and then, may admit of more dispute. Millions of men never lived together under a rule more severely just in intention than was that of Sir John Shore. But the Rohillas distrusted his equity.

The Mahrattas had no belief in his courage. The Nizam could not be convinced of his good faith. The oppressed Ryots were incredulous of his benevolence. Integrity, which, being only occasional and transient, passes for weakness and caprice, may work out evils even more intolerable than those of a consistent, resolute, and systematic injustice. Under their pacific Governor-General, the people of the East remembered the conquests of his predecessors, and were preparing to counteract, by secret or open hostilities, the further conquests of the pro-consuls who were to succeed him. His individual conscience could justly applaud the retrospect of his Asiatic dominion; but the national conscience, of which we have lately heard, had it any cause to exult in a pause of four years in an otherwise unbroken chain of successful aggressions on the princes and people of Hindostan?

When Napoleon wrote bulletins about the star of Austerlitz and the fulfilment of his destiny, we were all equally shocked at his principles and his style. Yet the apologies still ringing in our ears for the wars of Affghanistan, of Scinde, and of Gwalior, though made but yesterday by the highest authorities on either side of the House of Commons, were but a plagiarism from the Emperor of the French, in more correct, though less animated language. Nor could it be otherwise. Empire cannot be built up, either in the west or in the east, in contempt of the laws of God, and then be maintained according to the Decalogue. When the vessel must either drive before the gale or founder, the helmsman no longer looks at the chart. When the pedestals of the throne are terror and admiration, he who would sit there securely must consult other rules than those of the Evangelists. Sir John Shore was the St. Louis of Governors-

General. But if Clive had been like-minded, we should have had no India to govern. If Hastings had aspired to the title of 'The Just,' we should not have retained our dominion. If Wellesley had ruled in the spirit of his conscientious predecessor, we should infallibly have lost it. With profound respect for the contrary judgment of so good a man, we venture to doubt, whether the severe integrity which forbade him to bear the sceptre of the Moguls as others had borne it, should not have also forbidden his bearing it at all. Needlessly to assume incompatible duties, is permitted to no man. Cato would have ceased to be himself had he consented to act as a lieutenant of the Usurper. The British viceroy who shall at once be true to his employers, and strictly equitable to the princes of India and their subjects, need not despair of squaring the circle.

Returning a third time to his native land, Lord Teignmouth fell into the routine of common duties, and of common pleasures, with the ease of a man who had taken no delight in the pomp or in the exercise of power; but whose heart had been with his home and with his books, even while Nabobs and Rajahs were prostrating themselves before him. He became eminent at the Quarter Sessions, took down again the volumes in which Parr had lectured him, thinned out his shrubberies, visited at country-seats and watering-places, watched over his family and his poor neighbours, sent letters of good advice to his sons (to the perusal of which the public are now invited with perhaps more of filial than of fraternal piety), and, in short, lived the life so pleasant in reality, so tedious in description, of a well-educated English gentleman, of moderate fortune, moderate desires, and refined

tastes; with a fruitful vine on the walls of his house, and many olive branches round about his table.

If, as all Englishmen believe, this is the happiest condition of human existence, it illustrates the remark, that happiness is a serious, not to say a heavy thing. The exhibition of it in these volumes is rather amiable than exhilarating. India-House traditions tell, that when a young aspirant for distinction there, requested one of the Chairs to inform him what was the proper style of writing political despatches, the Chair made answer, 'the style we prefer is the *humdrum*.' This preference for the humdrum, enjoined perhaps by the same high authority, clung to Lord Teignmouth even after his return to Europe. He wrote as if to baffle the critics, and lived as if to perplex the biographers. A foreigner amongst us might perhaps have sketched him as a specimen of a class peculiar to England. But the portrait is too familiar for exhibition to English eyes, though none is dearer to English hearts. Who that has contemplated and loved (as who has not?) the wise, cheerful, and affectionate head of some large household, filling up without hurry or lassitude the wide circle of domestic, neighbourly, and magisterial duties, and aiming at nothing more — let him say whether the second Lord Teignmouth could have rendered animating in description, the tranquil years which the first Lord Teignmouth probably found the most grateful of his life in reality.

They were gliding quietly away, cheered by such retrospects as few have enjoyed, and gilded by hopes which few could so reasonably indulge, when the Society, then for the first time formed, for the circulation of the Bible, placed him at their head; not as a mere titular chief, but as the President by whom all their

deliberations were to be controlled, and as the dignitary by whom the collective body were to be represented. So high a trust could not have fallen into hands more curiously fitted for the discharge of it. There met and blended in him as much of the spirit of the world, and as much of the spirit of that sacred volume, as could combine harmoniously with each other. To the capacious views of a man long conversant with great affairs, he united a submission the most childlike to the supreme authority of those sacred records. To the high bearing of one for whose smile rival princes had sued, he added that unostentatious simplicity which is equally beyond the reach of those who solicit, and of those who really despise, human admiration. Conversant with mankind under all political and social aspects, and in every gradation of rank, it was at once his habit and his delight to withdraw from that indiscriminate intercourse into the interior circle where holy thoughts might be best nourished; and into the solitude where alone the modesty of his nature would permit the utterance of his devout affections. An Oriental scholar of no mean celebrity, and not without a cultivated taste for classical learning, he daily passed from such pursuits to the study of the Sacred Oracles — as one who, having sojourned in a strange land, returns to the familiar voices, the faithful counsels, and the well-proved loving-kindness of his father's house. To scatter through every tongue and kindred of the earth the inspired leaves by which his own mind was sustained and comforted, was a labour in which he found full scope and constant exercise for virtues, hardly to be hazarded in the government of India.

Of India, indeed, and of the fame of his Indian

administration, he had become strangely regardless — witnessing silently, if not with indifference, the overthrow of his policy, and the denial of his claims to the respect and gratitude of mankind. Ordinary men, it is true, are but seldom agitated by the temperament by which men of genius expiate their formidable eminence; but Lord Teignmouth seems to have had more than his due share of constitutional phlegm. He governed an Empire without ambition, wrote poetry without inspiration, and gave himself up to labours of love and works of mercy without enthusiasm. He was, in fact, rather a fatiguing man — of a narcotic influence in general society — with a pen which not rarely dropped truisms; sedate and satisfied under all the vicissitudes of life; the very antithesis and contradiction of the Hero, whose too tardy advent Mr. Carlyle is continually invoking. Yet he was one of those whom we may be well content to honour, while we yet wait the promised deliverer. He was a witness to the truth, that talents such as multitudes possess, and opportunities such as multitudes enjoy, may, under the homely guidance of perseverance and good sense, command the loftiest ascent to which either ambition or philanthropy can aspire; if that steep path be trodden with a firm faith in the Divine wisdom, a devout belief in the Divine goodness, and a filial promptitude of conformity to the Divine will.

To Lord Teignmouth, and to the other founders of the Bible Society, an amount of gratitude is due, which might, perhaps, have been more freely rendered, if it had been a little less grandiloquently claimed by the periodic eloquence of their followers. Her annual outbursts of self-applause are not quite justified by any success which this great Protestant

propaganda has hitherto achieved over her antagonists. Rome still maintains and multiplies her hostile positions — heathen and Mahomedan temples are as numerous and as crowded as before — ignorance and sin continue to scatter the too fertile seeds of sorrow through a groaning world — and it is no longer doubtful that the aspect of human affairs may remain as dark as ever, though the earth be traversed by countless millions of copies of the Holy Text. The only wonder is, that such a doubt should ever have arisen — that reasonable people should have anticipated the renovation of man to the higher purposes of his being, by any single agency — without an apparatus as complex as his own nature — or without influences as vivifying as those which gave him birth. To quicken the inert mass around us, and to render it prolific, it is necessary that the primeval or patriarchal institute of parental training should be combined with an assiduous education; with the various discipline of life; with the fellowship of domestic, civil, and ecclesiastical society; and, above all, with the re-creative power from on High devoutly implored and diligently cherished. The wicked habitations by which our globe is burdened, might, alas! be wicked still, though each of them were converted into a biblical library. And yet with the belief of the inspiration, whether plenary or partial, of the Scriptures, who can reconcile a disbelief of the momentous results with which the mere knowledge of them by mankind at large must be attended? Who will presume to estimate the workings of such an element of thought in such a world? — or to follow out the movements resulting from such a voice, when raised in every tongue and among all people, in opposition to the rude clamour from without, or the still harsher dis-

sonance from within? — or who will take on him to measure the consequences of exhibiting amongst all the tribes of men one immutable standard of truth — one eternal rule of duty — one spotless model for imitation?

If this vast confederacy of the Protestant and Greek churches was regarded by the less initiated with some degree of superstitious awe, and extolled beyond the severe limits of truth, the founders of the society were too well instructed in spiritual dynamics, to be themselves in bondage to that vulgar error. The more eminent of the Clapham sectarians thought of it but as one wheel in that elaborate mechanism, by which they believed that the world would at length be moved. Bell and Lancaster were both their welcome guests — schools, prison discipline, Savings' Banks, tracts, village libraries, district visitings, and church buildings — each, for a time, rivalled their cosmopolitan projects. But of their subordinate schemes none were so dear to them as that of prepossessing, in favour of their opinions and of their measures, the young men who were then preparing for ordination at Cambridge. Hence they held in special honour Isaac Milner, whose biography lies before us, and Charles Simeon, whose life is shortly to be published — both unavoidably residing at the university as their appointed sphere of labour; but both men of Clapham as frequent visitors, as habitual associates, and as zealous allies.

The biography of Isaac Milner, as recorded in the dense volume published by his niece, occupies a space nearly equal to that which the extant writers of antiquity have devoted to the celebration of all the worthies of Greece and Rome and Palestine put together. And yet of those who have still to reach the meridian of life,

how few are aware, either that such a man was famous in the last generation, or what was the ground of his celebrity? Oh! ye candidates for fame, put not your faith in coteries. See here how lavishly applause may be bestowed in one age, and how profound the silence into which it may die away in the next! See how a man may have been extolled, not thirty poor years ago, as a philosopher, historian, divine, and academic, on whom 'young England' has not one passing remembrance to bestow! And although the present effort to revive and perpetuate his glory be made by a kinswoman, prepared for that undertaking by knowledge, by ability, and by zeal; yet how avoid the conviction that the monument itself, like the name to which it is erected, is already becoming a premature ruin, and preaching one more unheeded sermon on the text which proclaims the vanity of all things?

If the several tendencies of Isaac Milner to moral and intellectual greatness had been permitted to act freely, and if Fortune had not caressed and enervated him by her too benignant smiles, his name might have been now illustrious in the *Fasti Cantabrigienses*. But she bestowed on him the rewards of eminence, such as wealth, leisure, reputation, and authority, without exacting the appointed price of toil and self-denial. Humble as was his hereditary station, he scarcely ever felt the invigorating influence of depending on his own exertions for subsistence, for comforts, or even for enjoyments. He soon obtained and soon resigned a fellowship at Queen's College, Cambridge, to become the president of that society; an office to which ere long were added the deanery of Carlisle, and the mathematical chair once occupied by Newton. Three such sinecures were a burden,

beneath which the most buoyant spirit could scarcely have moved with freedom. A splendid patrimony in the three per cents, or the golden repose of Lords Arden or Ellenborough, might agree well enough with the pursuits of a scholar or a statesman. Not so the laborious idleness of a deanery and a mastership, with their ceaseless round of chapters, and elections, and founders' feasts, and enclosure questions; and questions about new racks for the stables, and new rollers for the garden; and squabbles with contumacious canons and much-digesting fellows. Newton himself could not, at the same time, have given laws to the Butteries and explored the laws of the universe; and therefore it happened that Newton's successor was too busy for the duties of his lucrative professorship. Dalilah bound the strong man with cords supplied by Mammon for the purpose.

From such toils he might have broken away, if the wily courtezan had not thrown around him the more seductive bondage of social and colloquial popularity. The keen sarcasm, that 'science is his forte — omniscience, his foible,' though of later date, could never have been aimed at any of the giants of Cambridge with more truth, or with greater effect, than at the former president of Queen's. He had looked into innumerable books, had dipped into most subjects, whether of vulgar or of learned inquiry, and talked with shrewdness, animation, and intrepidity, on them all. Whatever the company and whatever the theme, his sonorous voice predominated over all other voices, even as his lofty stature, vast girth, and superincumbent wig, defied all competition. He was equally at home on a steeple-chase, and on final perseverance; and explained with the same confidence the economy of an ant-hill and the policy of the

Nizam. During the last half of his life the Johnsonilatria was at its height; and among the aspirants to the vacant conversational throne, none appeared to have a fairer title than himself. Parr, with his pipe and his pedantry, was offensive. Bishop Watson was pompous and tiresome. Lord Ellenborough, the first of that name, was but an eminent phrase-manufacturer. But Isaac Milner, however inferior to the sage of Bolt Court in genius, in wit, in practical wisdom, in philology, and in critical discernment, ranged over a wider field of knowledge; with a memory as ready and retentive, with higher animal spirits, a broader humour, a less artificial style, and an enjoyment so cordial and sociable of his own talk, as compelled every one else to enjoy it. If less contentious than his great prototype, he was not less authoritative. But his topics were more out of the reach of controversy, his temper more serene, and his audience far more subservient. In the whole of his career, he was probably never once surrounded by such a circle as that which at 'The Club' reduced the dominion of Johnson to the form of a limited monarchy. At Carlisle, the Dean was the life of an otherwise lifeless amalgam of country squires and well-endowed prebendaries. At Cambridge, the Master was the soul of dinner and tea parties, otherwise inanimate. At London, he was the centre of a circle, ever prompt (as are all London circles) to render homage to literary and intellectual rank; especially when it can condescend to be amusing and natural, and can afford to disclaim all pretensions to the elaborate refinements of metropolitan society. Thus the syren Fortune raised her most alluring strain—the flattery which rewards colloquial triumphs — that so she might induce the warrior to relax his

grasp of the weapons by which he might have achieved an enduring reputation.

Lashing himself to the mast, he still might have pursued his voyage to permanent renown, if the Enchantress had not raised up in his course certain fog-banks, to seduce him into the belief that he had already reached the yet far distant haven. The moderators, arbiters of Cantabrigian honours, had not only assigned to him the dignity of senior-wrangler, but with it the title of *Incomparabilis;* the comparison being made with his competitors of the year 1774. Among the 'Transactions of the Royal Society,' the curious may discover three or four contributions bearing the name of Isaac Milner, which, though little noticed at the time, and wholly forgotten now, were allowed to establish, in favour of one who sat in Newton's seat, a station among men of science; which, in an age not propitious to such studies, few had the wish, and fewer still the power, to contest. No scientific work or discovery illustrates his name, except the discovery, much insisted on by his biographer, and much rejoiced in by himself, that the invisible girl of Leicester Square was not a Fairy enshrined in the brazen ball from which her speaking trumpets issued; but an old woman in the next room squeaking through hidden tubes, the orifices of which were brought into nice contact with corresponding apertures in the lips of those magical trumpets. On the opposite side of the same Square rose an observatory, where, a hundred years earlier, his great predecessor had investigated enigmas of greater significance. In literature, Dr. Milner was chiefly known as the Editor of the last two volumes of his brother's Church History, which apparently received great additions and improvements from his hands. They

have been extolled as containing the most comprehensive and authentic account of the Reformation in Germany, and of the character of the great German Reformer; — a praise to which it is impossible to subscribe, for this, if for no other reason; that neither the Author nor the Editor had ever seen, or would have been able to read, one line of the many volumes written by Luther in his mother tongue, and even yet untranslated into any other. A biographical preface of a few pages, prefixed to a posthumous volume of the same brother's sermons, with two controversial pamphlets, complete the catalogue of the literary labours of more than half a century of learned and well-beneficed leisure. Of those pamphlets one was an assault on the ecclesiastical history of the late Dr. Haweis. The other made havoc of the person and writings of Herbert Marsh, the late Bishop of Peterborough. Marsh had denounced the sin and danger of giving people the Bible to read unyoked to the Prayer-book; and Milner answered him by an examination much more curious than civil, into the question — 'Who, and what is Dr. Herbert Marsh?' The indignant liturgist replied by an equally courteous attempt to determine the who, and the what, touching Dr. Isaac Milner. With cassocks torn, and reputations not much exalted, the combatants retired from the field, and never again appeared among the aspirants to literary renown. Adulation whispered to them both that such glory was already theirs, and in her harlotry and her blandishments betrayed them into the belief of that too welcome assurance.

But Isaac Milner was no ordinary person. His body (the very image of the informing mind) was athletic and capacious, yet coarse and clumsy withal, and alive, far more than is usual with the giant

brood, to every vicissitude of pleasure and of pain. His muscular and his nervous structure seemed to belong to two different men, or rather to be of different sexes. The sense of vast physical power was unattended by animal courage; and the consciousness of great intellectual strength animated him to no arduous undertakings. Robust as he was and omnivorous, he was haunted by imaginary maladies and ideal dangers; shuddering at the east wind, and flying to a hiding-place at the sound of thunder. In the pursuit of knowledge, he was as an elephant forcing his way through saplings, and bending them to his purpose with a proboscis alike firm and flexible; yet at the next moment obeying the feeblest hand, alarmed by the most transient blaze, and turned out of his way by the first mournful gong or joyous cymbal. He was a kind of Ajax-Andromache, combining such might with such sensibility as made him at once admirable, loveable, and inefficient. Call at the lodge at Queen's in the evening, and you heard him with stentorian lungs tumbling out masses of knowledge, illuminated by remarks so pungent, and embellished with stories, illustrations, gestures, and phrases so broad and unceremonious, that you half expected the appearance of the Lady Margaret, to remind the master of the house that she had built that long gallery, and those oriel windows, for meditation and studious silence. Call again in the morning, and you found him broken-hearted over some of the sorrows to which flesh is heir, or agitated by some collegiate controversy, or debating with his apothecary how many scruples of senna should enter into his next draught, as though life and death were in the balances. Thus erratic in all his pursuits, and responsive to every outward impression, he failed in

that stern perseverance, without which none may become the teachers, the rulers, or the benefactors of mankind, and with which perhaps but few can be much courted as companions, or much loved as friends.

But so to be loved and courted, should not be regarded as a mere selfish luxury. A wise and good man, and such was Isaac Milner, will regard popular acceptance as an advantage convertible to many excellent uses; and so he considered it. His great talents were his social talents. In talk, ever ready, ever animated, and usually pregnant with profound meaning, he found the law, and fulfilled the end, of his sublunary existence. He talked with children (his chosen associates) inimitably. It was like a theological lecture from Bunyan, or a geographical discourse from De Foe. He talked with the great and the rich, as one who was their equal in wealth, and their superior in worship. He talked with pugilists, musicians, and graziers, at once to learn and to interpret the mysteries of their several crafts. He talked with physicians to convince them that their art was empirical. He talked with politicians to rouse them to the dangers of Catholic emancipation. He talked on paper to his correspondents pleasantly and affectionately, though, on the chapter of his own affections, too abundantly. He talked also to his chosen and intimate friends, but not in the same fitful strain. To them, from the abundance of the heart, he spoke on the theme which alone gave any unity of design to the otherwise incongruous habits of his life; and which alone harmonised the passages, droll and melancholy, pompous and affectionate, bustling and energetic, of which it was composed. It was that theme which engages the latest thoughts of all men —

the retrospect and the prospect; the mystery within, and the dread presence without; the struggle, and the triumph, and the fearful vengeance; and whatever else is involved in the relations which subsist between mortal man and the eternal Source of his existence. To search into those relations, and into the duties and hopes and fears flowing from them, was the end which Isaac Milner still proposed to himself, under all his ever-varying moods. From his brother he had derived the theological tenets, for the dissemination of which the History of the Church had been written. Reposing in them with inflexible constancy, he drew from them hopes which, notwithstanding his constitutional infirmities, imparted dignity to his character, and peace to his closing hours. He was the intellectual chief of his party, and the members of it resorted to him at Cambridge, there to dispel doubts, and thence to bring back responses, oracular, authoritative, and profound. Nor could they have made a better choice; for to his capacity, learning, and colloquial eloquence, he added a most absolute sincerity and good faith. He had an instinct which could detect at a glance, and a temper which loathed, all manner of cant and false pretension; and he estimated at their real worth the several kinds of religious theatricals, liveries, and free-masonries.

Kind-hearted, talkative, wise, old man! from the slumbers of many bygone years how easy is it to raise his image — joyful, as when he exulted over his exorcism of the clothes-tearing ghost of Sawston; or jocund, as when he chuckled over the remembrance of the hearty box he inflicted on the ears of Lord Archibald Hamilton, who, in all the pride of pugilism, had defied the assault of unscientific knuckles; or grandiloquent, as when he reviewed the glories of his

first vice-chancellorship, in which he had expelled from the Senate Lucius Catalina Frend; or the triumphs of his second consulate, when, having thundered his philippics against Marcus Antonius Brown, he was hailed as *Pater Academiæ*. Well! he is gone, and Alma Mater has still her heads of houses, men of renown; but if once again the table could be spread in that hospitable old dining-room at Queen's, with the facetious Dean at the head of it, there is not among the incomparable wranglers, and conversing Encyclopædias of them all, any one who would be fit to sit over against him as Croupier.

As a member of the Confederation of the Common, the Dean of Carlisle administered the province assigned to him rather by the weight of his authority, than by any active exertions. Under the shelter of his name, his college flourished as the best cultured and most fruitful nursery of the evangelical neophytes of Cambridge. From a theological school maintained at Elland, in Yorkshire, at the charge of the Clapham exchequer, an unbroken succession of students were annually received there; destined, at the close of their academical career, to ascend and animate the pulpits of the national church. But if to the President of Queen's belonged the dignity of *Præpositus* of the evangelical youth of the University, the far more arduous and responsible office of *Archididascalus* was occupied by a fellow of the adjacent royal college.

Long Chamber at Eton, has been the dormitory of many memorable men, and King's has been to many a famous Etonian little better than a permanent dormitory. But about seventy years ago was elected, from the one to the other of those magnificent foundations, a youth, destined thenceforward to wage irreconcilable war with the slumbers and the slum-

berers of his age. Let none of those (and they are a great multitude) who have enshrined the memory of Charles Simeon in the inner sanctuary of their hearts, suppose that it is in a trifling or irreverent spirit that the veil is for a moment raised, which might otherwise conceal the infirmities of so good a man. He was indeed one of those on whom the impress of the divine image was distinct and vivid. But the reflected glory of that image, (such was his own teaching,) is heightened, not tarnished, by a contrast with the poverty of the material on which it may be wrought, and of the ground from which it emerges.

They who recollect the late Mr. Terry, the friend of Walter Scott, may imagine the countenance and manner of Charles Simeon. To a casual acquaintance he must frequently have appeared like some truant from the green-room, studying in clerical costume for the part of Mercutio, and doing it scandalously ill. Such adventurous attitudes, such a ceaseless play of the facial muscles, so seeming a consciousness of the advantages of his figure, with so seeming an unconsciousness of the disadvantages of his carriage — a seat in the saddle so triumphant, badinage so ponderous, stories so exquisitely unbefitting him about the pedigree of his horses or the vintages of his cellar — the caricaturists must have been faithless to their calling, and the under-graduates false to their nature, if pencil, pen, and tongue had not made him their prey. Candid friends were compelled (of course by the force of truth and conscience) to admit that he was not altogether clear of the sin of coxcombry; and the worshippers of Bacchus and of Venus gave thanks that they were jolly fellows, and not like this Pharisee.

To the reproach of affectation and conceit, his

disciples made answer, that their master had shed his original manner as soon and as completely as his original teeth; and that the new or artificial manner was not only more deeply rooted than the old, but was in fact as natural; being but the honest though awkward effort of the soul within, to give vent to the most genuine feelings for which it could find no other utterance. To the charge of hypocrisy, they replied, that it was related to truth in that sense only in which opposites and contradictions are related. They maintained that even the superficial weaknesses of their teacher ministered to his real designs; just as the very offal of the Holocaust feeds the sacred flame by which the offering is consumed. Here, they said, was a man beset by difficulties enough to have baffled the whole school of Athens, as brought together by the imagination of Raphael D'Urbino — by inveterate affectations, by the want of learning, by the want of social talents, by the want of general ability of any kind, by the want of interest in the pursuits of his neighbours, by their want of sympathy in his pursuits, by the want of their good-will, nay, by the want of their decided and hearty animosity. Yet thus unprovided for the contest, he gained a victory which the sternest cynic in that glorious assemblage might have condescended to envy, and the most eloquent of the half-inspired sages there, to extol. Slowly, painfully, but with unfaltering hopes, he toiled through more than fifty successive years, in the same narrow chamber and among the same humble congregation — requited by no emolument, stimulated by no animating occurrences, and unrewarded, until the near approach of old age, by the gratitude or the cordial respect of the society amidst which he lived. Love soaring to the

Supreme with the lowliest self-abasement, and stooping to the most abject with the meekest self-forgetfulness, bore him onward, through fog or sunshine, through calm or tempest. His whole life was but one long labour of love — a labour often obscure, often misapplied, often unsuccessful, but never intermitted, and at last triumphant.

At the close of each academical year, a crowd of youths, just entering into the business of life, received from Charles Simeon his parting counsels and benediction. They had been his pupils, his associates, and his grateful admirers. Without money and without price, he had sedulously imparted to them a science, which, to many a simple mind, compensated for the want of any other philosophy; and which, to the best and ripest scholars, disclosed the fountains whence all the streams of truth are salient, and the boundless expanse of knowledge towards which they are all convergent. It was the science of which God himself is the author, and men sent of God the interpreters, and revelation, conscience, and history the records. It was that science which explains the internal connexion of this world's history; in which law and ethics and politics have their common basis; which alone imparts to poetry and art their loftier character; without which the knowledge of mind and of mental operations is an empty boast, and even the severer problems of the world's material economy are insoluble. It was that science for the diffusion of which the halls and colleges of that learned university had been almost exclusively founded — the only science which Cambridge neglected, and which Charles Simeon taught. And yet the teacher was neither historian, poet, artist, lawyer, politician, nor philosopher. He was simply a devout and be-

lieving man, who, in the language of Bunyan, 'dwelt far from the damp shadows of Doubting Castle,' amidst the sunshine of those everlasting hills whence stout Mr. Greatheart and brave Mr. Hopeful, in days of yore, surveyed the boundless prospect, and inhaled the fresh breezes which welcomed them at the close of their pilgrimage. Thither their modern follower conducted his pilgrims by a way which Mr. Worldly-wisdom could never find, and which Mr. Self-confidence despised when it was pointed out to him.

In the Church of the Holy Trinity at Cambridge, every Sunday, during more than half a century, witnessed the gathering of a crowd which hung on the lips of the preacher, as men hearken to some unexpected intelligence of a deep but ever-varying interest. Faces pale with study or furrowed by bodily labour, eyes failing with age or yet undimmed by sorrow, were bent towards him with a gaze, of which (with whatever other meaning it might be combined) fixed attention was the predominant character. Towards the close of that long period, the pulpit of St. Mary's was, occasionally, the centre of the same attraction, and with a still more impressive result. For there were critics in theology, and critics in style and manner, and critics in gastronomy, thronging and pressing on each other, as once on Mars' Hill, to hear what this babbler might say; listening with the same curiosity, and adjudicating on what they had heard, in very much the same spirit. Yet he to whom this homage was rendered, was a man of ungraceful address; with features which ceased to be grotesque only when they became impassioned; with a voice weak and unmusical; and to whom no muse was propitious. His habits, and his very theory of

composition, were such as seemed to promise empty pews and listless auditors; for every discourse was originally constructed (to use his own phrase) as a 'skeleton,' with all the hard processes and the fine articulations as prominent as his logical anatomy could render them — the bony dialectic being then clothed with the fibrous and muscular rhetoric, in such manner as the meditations of the preceding, or the impulses of the passing, hour might suggest. Such was his faith in this new art of oratory, that, in a collection entitled '*Horæ Homileticæ*,' he gave to the world many hundred of these preparations, to be afterwards arrayed by other preachers in such fleshly integuments as might best cover their ghastliness. Deplorable as the operation must have been in other hands than those of the inventor, he well knew how to make his dry bones live. They restrained the otherwise undisciplined ardour of his feelings, and corrected the tendency of that vital heat to disperse all solidity, and to dissolve all coherence, of thought. His argumentation might occasionally irritate the understanding, his illustrations wound the taste, and his discourses provoke the smiles of his audience. But when, as was his wont, he insisted on fundamental truths, or enforced the great duties of life, or detected the treacheries of the heart, or traced the march of retributive justice, or caught and echoed the compassionate accents in which the Father of mercies addresses his erring children, it was a voice which penetrated and subdued the very soul. It was an eloquence which silenced criticism. It was instinct with a contagious intensity of belief. It sounded as the language of one to whom the mysteries and the futurities of which he spoke had been disclosed in actual vision, and so disclosed as to have

dissipated every frivolous thought, and calmed every turbid emotion.

If the Church of England were not in bondage with her children to certain Acts of Parliament, she would long ere now have had a religious order of the Simeonites; and would have turned out of her catalogue some of her saints of equivocal character, and some of doubtful existence, to make room for St. Charles of Cambridge. What have Dunstan, and George of Cappadocia, and Swithin the bishop, and Margaret the virgin, and Crispin the martyr, done for us, that they should elbow out a man who, through a long life, supplied from the resources of his own mind, to the youth of one of our universities, the theological education not otherwise to be obtained there; and who, from the resources of his own hereditary fortune, supplied the means of purchasing, in the most populous cities of England, from forty to fifty advowsons, that so the ecclesiastical patronage of those vital organs of our commonwealth might be ever thenceforward exercised in favour of zealous, devout, and *evangelical* ministers?

In that last ugly epithet lies all the mischief. 'He is not a Jansenist, may it please your majesty, but merely an atheist,' was once accepted as a sufficient excuse of a candidate for royal favour. He is not an evangelical clergyman, but merely a Parson Trulliber, was an equally successful apology with the dispensers of fame and promotion in the last age. Among them was the late Bishop Jebb, who, in his posthumous correspondence, indulges in sneers on the gospeller of Cambridge, as cold and as supercilious as if he had himself belonged to the Trulliber school of divinity; instead of being, as he was, an elegant inquirer into the curiosities of theological literature. So great a

master of parallelisms and contrasts might have perceived how the splendour of his own mitre waned before that nobler episcopate to which Charles Simeon had been elevated, as in primitive times, by popular acclamation. His *diocese* embraced almost every city of his native land, and extended to many of the remote dependencies which then, as now, she held in subjection. In every ecclesiastical section of the Empire he could point to teachers who revered him as the guide of their youth, and the councillor of their later years. In his frequent visitations of the churches of which he was the patron or the founder, love and honour waited on him. His infirmities disappeared, or were forgotten, in the majesty of a character animated from early youth to extreme old age by such pursuits as, we are taught to believe, are most in harmony with the Divine will, and most conducive to the happiness of mankind. He had passed his long life in the midst of censors, who wanted neither the disposition nor the power to inflict signal chastisement upon any offence which could be fastened on him; but he descended to the grave unassailed by any more formidable weapons than a thick and constant flight of harmless epigrams. He descended thither amidst the tears and the benedictions of the poor; and with such testimonies of esteem and attachment from the learned, as Cambridge had never before rendered even to the most illustrious of her sons; and there he was laid, in that sure and certain hope on which he enabled an almost countless multitude to repose, amidst the wreck of this world's promises, and in the grasp of their last and most dreaded enemy.

What is a party, political or religious, without a Review? A bell swinging without a clapper. What

is any society of men, if not recruited from the rising generation? A hive of neutral bees. Reviewless, Clapham had scarcely been known beyond her own Common. Youthless, her memory had never descended to the present age. At once rapt into future times, and thoughtful of her own, she addressed the world on the first day of each successive month through the columns of the 'Christian Observer;' and employed the pen of him on whom her hopes most fondly rested, to confer splendour and celebrity on pages not otherwise very alluring. To Mr. Macaulay was assigned the arduous post of Editor. He and his chief contributors enjoyed the advantage, permitted, alas! to how few of their tribe, of living in the same village, and meeting daily in the same walks or at the same table, and lightening, by common counsel, the cares of that feudal sovereignty. The most assiduous in doing suit and service to the Suzerain, was Henry Thornton. But he whose homage was most highly valued, and whose fealty was attested by the richest offerings, was the young, the much loved, and the much lamented John Bowdler.

He was the scion of a house singularly happy in the virtues and talents of its members; and was hailed by the unanimous acclamation of the whole of that circle of which Mr. Wilberforce was the centre, as a man of genius, piety, and learning, who, in the generation by which they were to be succeeded, would prosecute their own designs with powers far superior to theirs. A zeal too ardent to be entirely discreet, which gave to the world two posthumous volumes of his essays in verse and prose, has, unintentionally, refuted such traditions as had assigned to him a place among philosophers, or poets, or divines. And yet so rare

were the component parts of his character, and so just their combination, that, but for his premature death, the bright auguries of his early days could hardly have failed of their accomplishment. His course of life was, indeed, uneventful. A school education, followed by the usual training for the bar; a brilliant, though brief success, closed by an untimely death, complete a biography which has been that of multitudes. But the interior life of John Bowdler, if it could be faithfully written, would be a record which none could read without reverence, and few without self-reproach.

To those who lived in habitual intercourse with him, it was evident that there dwelt on his mind a sense of self-dedication to some high and remote object; and that the pursuits, which are as ultimate ends to other men, were but as subservient means to him. So intent was he on this design, as to appear incapable of fatigue, frail as were his bodily powers; and as to be unassailable by the spirit of levity, though fertile and copious in discourse almost to a fault. It is the testimony of one who for nearly twelve months divided with him the same narrow Study, that during the whole of that period he was never heard to utter an idle word, nor seen to pass an idle minute. He stood aloof from all common familiarities, yielding his affection to a very few, and, to the rest, a courtesy somewhat reserved and stately. His friends were not seldom reminded how awful goodness is, as they watched his severe self-discipline, and listened, not without some wandering wishes for a lighter strain, to discourses, didactic rather than conversational, in which he was ever soaring to heights, and wrestling with problems inaccessible to

themselves. But they felt and loved the moral sublimity of a devotion so pure and so devout, to purposes the most exempt from selfishness. They were exulting in prospects which it appeared irrational to distrust, and were hailing him as the future architect of plans, to be executed or conceived only by minds like his, when, from the darkness which shrouds the counsels of the Omniscient, went forth a decree, designed, as it might seem, at once to rebuke the presumption of mortal man, and to give him a new assurance of his immortality. It rent asunder ties as many and as dear as ever bound to this earth a soul ripe for translation to a higher sphere of duty; and was obeyed with an acquiescence as meek and cheerful as ever acknowledged the real presence of fatherly love under the severer forms of parental discipline. His profound conviction of the magnitude of the trust, and of the endowments confided to him, was really justified even when seemingly defeated by the event; for it showed that those powers had been destined for an early exercise in some field of service commensurate with the holy ardour by which he had been consumed. Of those who met round his grave, such as yet live are now in the wane of life; nor is it probable that, in their retrospect of many years, any one of them can recall a name more inseparably allied than that of John Bowdler to all that teaches the vanity of the hopes which terminate in this world, and the majesty of the hopes which extend beyond it.

And thus closes, though it be far from exhausted, our chronicle of the worthies of Clapham, of whom it may be said, as it was said of those of whom the world was not worthy, 'These all died in faith.'

With but very few exceptions, they had all partaken largely of those sorrows which probe the inmost heart, and exercise its fortitude to the utmost. But sweet, and not less wise than sweet, is the song in which George Herbert teaches, that when the Creator had bestowed every other gift on his new creature man, he reserved Rest to himself, that so the wearied heart in search of that last highest blessing, might cheerfully return to Him who made it. They died in the faith that for their descendants, at no remote period, was reserved an epoch glorious, though probably awful, beyond all former example. It was a belief derived from the intimations, as they understood them, of the prophets of Israel; but it was also gathered from sources which to many will seem better entitled to such confidence.

Revolving the great dramatic action of which this earth has been the scene, they perceived that it was made up of a protracted conflict between light and darkness. They saw that on the one side, science and religion — on the other, war and superstition — had been the great agents on this wide theatre. They traced a general movement of events towards the final triumph of good over evil; but observed that this tendency was the result of an all-controlling Providence, which had almost invariably employed the bad passions of man as the reluctant instruments of the Divine mercy — sending forth a long succession of conquerors, barbarous or civilised, as missionaries of woe, to prepare the way for the heralds of peace. They saw, or thought they saw, this economy of things drawing to its close. Civilisation and, in name at least, Christianity, had at length possessed the far greater and nobler regions of the globe.

Goths and Vandals were now the foremost amongst the nations. Even the Scythians had become members of a vast and potent monarchy. The Arabs had again taken refuge in their deserts. If Genghis or Timour should re-appear, their power would be broken against the British empire of Hindostan. The mightiest of warriors had triumphed and had fallen; as if to prove how impregnable had become the barriers of the European world against such aggressions. On every side the same truth was proclaimed, that military subjugation was no longer to be the purifying chastisement of Christendom.

But the religion of Christ was conquering and to conquer. Courting and exulting in the light, it had made a strict alliance with philosophy — the only faith which could ever endure such an association. Amidst the imbecility and dotage of every other form of belief and worship, it alone flourished in perennial youth and indomitable vigour. If any thing in futurity could be certain, it was the ultimate and not very remote dominion, over the whole earth, of the faith professed by every nation which retained either wisdom to investigate, or energy to act, or wealth to negotiate, or power to interpose in the questions which most deeply affect the entire race of man. If any duty was most especially incumbent on those who exercised an influence in the national councils of England, it was that of contributing, as best they might, to speed onwards the approaching catastrophe of human affairs — the great consummation whence is to arise that new era with which creation travails and is in birth, which poets have sung and prophets foretold, and which shall justify to the world, and perhaps to other worlds, all that Christians believe of

the sacrifice, surpassing thought and language, made for the deliverance and the exaltation of mankind.

When such thoughts as these force themselves on the German mind, it forthwith soars towards the unapproachable, and indites the unutterable. When the practical Englishman is the subject of them, he betakes himself to form societies, to collect subscriptions, to circulate books, to send forth teachers, to build platforms, and to afflict his neighbours by an eloquence of which one is tempted to wish that it was really unutterable. Such was the effect of these bright anticipations on the Clapham mind — an effect perceptible in many much better things, but, among the rest, in much equivocal oratory, and in at least one great effort of architecture.

Midway between the Abbey of Westminster and the Church of the Knights Templars, twin columns, emulating those of Hercules, fling their long shadows across the strait through which the far-resounding Strand pours the full current of human existence into the deep recesses of Exeter Hall. Borne on that impetuous tide, the mediterranean waters lift up their voice in a ceaseless swell of exulting or pathetic declamation. The changeful strain rises with the civilisation of Africa, or becomes plaintive over the wrongs of chimney-boys, or peals anathemas against the successors of Peter, or in rich diapason calls on the Protestant churches to awake and evangelise the world. No hard task to discover here the causes *corruptæ eloquentiæ!* If the shades of Lucian or of Butler hover near that elevated stage, how readily must they detect the anti-types of Peregrinus or of Ralpho! Criticise, for there is no lack of extravagance. Laugh, for there is no stint of affectation.

Yet refuse not to believe, that, grotesque as her aspect may occasionally be, Exeter Hall has a history, a doctrine, and a prophecy, of no common significance.

Of that history, the preceding pages may afford some general intimation. The doctrine is that of an all-embracing, all-enduring charity—embracing every human interest, enduring much human infirmity. The prophecy is a higher and more arduous theme.

It is a prophetical age. We have Nominalists who, from the monosyllable 'Church,' educe a long line of shadowy forms, hereafter to arise and reign on Episcopal or patriarchal thrones — and Realists, who foresee the moral regeneration of the land by means of union workhouses, of emigrant ships, or of mechanics' institutes — and Mediævals, who promise the return of Astræa in the persons of Bede and Bernard *redivivi* — and Mr. Carlyle, who offers most eloquent vows for the reappearance of the heroes who are to set all things right — and profound interpreters of the Apocalypse, who discover the woes impending over England in chastisement of the impiety which moved Lord Melbourne to introduce Mr. Owen to the Queen of England.* In the midst of all these predictions, Exeter Hall also prophesies. As to the events which are coming upon us, she adopts the theory of her Claphamic progenitor. In reducing that theory to

* One of the strange blemishes in a work very lately published by the Rev. E. B. Elliott, under the title of *Horæ Apocalypticæ* — a book of profound learning, singular ingenuity, and almost bewitching interest.

*** The years which have elapsed since the preceding note was written, have ascertained that society at large has most cordially acknowledged the charm to which it refers — a fact which the Historian of the Clapham Sect must record with some exultation, as Mr. Elliott himself was bred up in that fraternity, and is one of the most eminent members of it in the second generation.

practice, she is almost as much a Socialist as Mr. Owen himself. The moral regeneration which she foretells is to be brought about neither by church, by workhouse, by monk, by hero, nor by the purifying of St. James's. She believes in the continually decreasing power of individual, and the as constantly augmenting power of associated, minds. She looks on the age as characterised by a nearer approach than was ever known before to intellectual equality. But Exeter Hall is no croaker. Her temperament is as sanguine as her eloquence. Enumerate to her the long list of illustrious men who, while scarcely beyond their boyhood, had, at the commencement of this century, reached the highest eminence in every path to distinction; and point out to her the impossibility of selecting now, from those who have yet to complete their fortieth summer, any four names, the loss of which would be deplored by any art, or science, or calling in use amongst us;— and, in despite of Oxford, and Young England, and Mr. Carlyle, Exeter Hall makes answer — 'So much the better. The sense of separate weakness is the secret of collective strength. Ours is the age of societies. For the redress of every oppression that is done under the sun, there is a public meeting. For the cure of every sorrow by which our land or our race can be visited, there are patrons, vice-presidents, and secretaries. For the diffusion of every blessing of which mankind can partake in common, there is a committee. That confederacy which, when pent up within the narrow limits of Clapham, jocose men invidiously called a "Sect," is now spreading through the habitable globe. The day is not distant when it will assume the form, and be hailed by the glorious title, of The Universal Church.'

Happy and animating hopes! Who would destroy them if he could? Long may they warm many an honest bosom, and quicken into activity many an otherwise sluggish temper! The true Claphamite will know how to separate the pure ore of truth from the dross of nonsense to which the prophets of his time give utterance. He will find sympathy for most, and indulgence for all, of the schemes of benevolence which surround him. Like the founders of his sect, he will rejoice in the progress and prospects of their cause; nor will he abandon his creed, however unpopular it may be made by the presumption, or however ridiculous by the follies, of some of the weaker brethren by whom it has been adopted.

THE HISTORIAN OF ENTHUSIASM.

THE author of the 'Natural History of Enthusiasm' has published many books since the appearance of that from which he takes the title of his literary peerage. All of them have the indelible dye and impress of his own peculiar feelings, tastes, and fancies. No man is less chargeable with self-conceit, yet he can scarcely write a paragraph which does not bear the stamp of his own distinctive personality. In each of his volumes he has drawn his own portrait. He comes forth from his study in the character of a grave and learned teacher, but immediately becomes a familiar acquaintance, a member of any family circle into which he enters.

If the historian of Enthusiasm be as prudent as he is wise, he will bequeath to the world his own biography. If not, it will be compiled at hazard from the materials of which he has thus given to the world so large a store. Some future Daniel De Foe will put together 'Memoirs of a late celebrated Author, written by himself, and lately discovered among his papers.' Some Curl or Tonson will be found to vouch for the authenticity of the narrative. The hero of it will by that time have passed out of his present, or planetary abode, into the solar sphere, which his physical theory of a future state assigns as

a future dwelling-place to those who have faithfully discharged the duties committed to them on earth. The organs of sight, which he is there to enjoy, will enable him to cast an occasional glance over the works and ways of this poor satellite, and to run over the whole literature of one of our terrestrial years as a sublunary reader glides through his newspaper. Even in that exalted state, his equanimity may perhaps fail him, as he deciphers the posthumous and mendacious story of his mundane parentage, education, pursuits, and employments.

The fabulist, however, will not be quite without excuse. It is a natural and an honest wish to know something about a writer, in whose company hour after hour has flown away so pleasantly. In the absence of truth, fiction may, however imperfectly, minister to this want. It may delineate the author as he appears in his books, if not as he actually appeared among his associates. It will create opportunities for throwing out a judgment on those books with greater ease and freedom than in a more didactic method; and if the pseudo-biographer should happen to have a heart to love what is amiable, and to revere what is exalted, in his intellectual superiors, his romance would enable him to give expression to such feelings, without the embarrassment which besets a deliberate and formal eulogist.

Will it then be an unpardonable liberty, if, while our teacher still lives to adorn this lower world, and labours to improve it, we venture to take such a conjectural survey of his life as may be deduced from his writings, and such a survey of his writings as may be suggested by the apparent course and habits of his life? A temper so frank and kindly as his, will not very sternly rebuke the effrontery of assuming his

person, and writing in his character, without the slightest personal acquaintance with himself and his affairs. But even the pain of such a rebuke would be tolerable, if he should be further provoked to substitute a true and genuine, for the following imaginary autobiography.

One of those seemingly motionless rivers which wind their way through the undulating surface of the south of England, sweeps round the outskirts of a long succession of buildings, half town, half village, where the meanness of the wattled cottages is relieved by the usual neighbourhood of structures of greater dignity—the moated grange—the mansion house pierced by lines of high narrow windows—the square tower of the church struggling through a copse of elm trees—the grey parsonage, where the conservative rector meditates his daily newspaper and his weekly discourse—the barn-fashioned meeting-house, coeval with the accession of the House of Hanover—and near it the decent residence in which, since that auspicious era, have dwelt the successive pastors of that nonconformist flock, fanning a generous spirit of resistance to tyrants, now to be encountered only in imagination, or in the records of times long since passed away.

In the close of the last century my father, a mild and venerable man, ruled his household in that modest though not unornamented abode; for there might be seen the solemn portraits of the original confessors of dissent, with many a relic commemorative of their sufferings and their worth. With these were contrasted the lighter and curious embellishments which

attest the presence of refined habits, female taste, and domestic concord. There also were drawn up in deep files the works and the biographies of the puritan divines, from Thomas Cartwright, the great antagonist of Whitgift, to Matthew Pool, who, in his Synopsis Criticorum, vindicated the claims of the ejected ministers to profound biblical learning. This veteran battalion was flanked by a company of lighter troops, drafted from the polite literature of a more frivolous age. Rich in these treasures, and in the happy family with whom he shared them, the good man would chide or smile away such clouds as chequered his habitual composure, when those little nameless courtesies, so pleasantly exchanged between equals, were declined by the dignified incumbent, or were accepted with elaborate condescension by the wealthy squire. Nor could the democratic sway of the ruling elders, supreme over the finances and the discipline of the chapel, draw from him an audible sigh, even when his delicate sense was writhing under wounds imperceptible to their coarser vision. He had deliberately made his choice, and was content to pay the accustomed penalties. Though denounced as a sectarian, he was at heart a Catholic, generous enough to feel that the insolence of some of his neighbours, and the vulgarity of others, were rather the accidents of their position than the vices of their character. Such vexations as these were beneath the regard of him, who maintained in the village the sacred cause for which martyrs had sacrificed life with all its enjoyments, and who designed to train up his son to the same honourable service, however ill-requited by the distinctions or by the riches of this transitory world.

That hope, however, was not to be fulfilled. I had been educated under the eye of my father, and had

derived from him all my elementary acquaintance with ancient and modern languages, with theology, and with physical and moral science. I had early learnt to venerate his magnanimity and his devotion, and had derived from him his own thirst for knowledge. But his freedom of thought was an inalienable part of my intellectual patrimony. It was not in my nature to receive my opinions by inheritance. Whether they were right or wrong, they were my own; acquired, not by descent from any one, but by severe and protracted labours.

I have studied and drawn the characters of too many men, to have been a careless student of my own. I have invented too many physiological theories, not to have one at hand for the interpretation of whatever is peculiar in myself. My habitual introspection has made me more than half a convert to the doctrine of the duality of the human soul—the doctrine, that is, that each of the two lobes of the brain is inhabited by a distinct person—that what we call a soliloquy, is nothing else than a dialogue between them—that the internal conflict between the new Adam and the old, is no metaphor or allegory, but a dry matter of fact—that a good or a wise man is one, in forming whose volitions the healthy side of the cranium is habitually triumphant—a knave or a fool, one in whom such volitions are for the most part formed on the opposite or diseased side.

By the aid of this hypothesis, I am able to explain the absence of all apparent affinity between the elements of which my nature was originally composed. It was as though the sensitive plant had been grafted on the Norwegian pine, or as if a Spartan soldier had been enthralled by the Idylls of Theocritus, or as if an anchorite had devoted himself to the imitation of

the cosmetic Earl of Chesterfield. I shrank from the rude familiarities of the world, while impatient for the world's applause. I was a worshipper of hoar antiquity, and yet a libertine in the exercise of my own unfettered judgment. At one time I braced my nerves for controversy, and at another relaxed them in romantic dreams. I buried myself in solitude to fathom the mysteries of my own nature, and then revealed my discoveries in a style like that of the most fashionable Irish oratory. I grew up to manhood with a philanthropy as fastidious as it was ardent. My passion for books was alternately my delight and my torture. I narrowly escaped, in my youthful days, producing a poem, in which the styles of Juvenal and of Tibullus would have been reconciled with each other, as a kind of compromise between the robust and indignant inmate of one half of my brain, and the delicate and sentimental genius who possessed the other half.

In the midst of this cerebral war, the necessity which comes to all had come to me, of choosing a profession. The choice, indeed, seemed made to my hand. I had been a theologian from my boyhood, why not a teacher of Theology? The ecclesiastical polity of the Protestant dissenters possessed my earliest sympathies. My most mature convictions had embraced their religious system. Why not, then, mount the rostrum of my forefathers, and, like them, sustain the interests and inculcate the doctrines of the least prosperous of the churches of my native land? So, indeed, resolved the Self inhabiting one of the phrenological hemispheres within me. But the resolution was ultimately reversed by the superior energy of the Self who reigned over the opposite hemisphere.

I became an enthusiastic student of Divinity. My

ardour grew with my early progress in those researches. 'Glorious science!' I exclaimed; 'the substratum of all sciences! the perfection of human knowledge! the theme of the noblest intellects which have appeared among the children of men! the doctrine which has the happiness of mankind for its object, and which, even in its most abstruse and subtle forms, is still culminating towards universal love, and pointing to the abodes of the blessed!' Alas! for the illusions of the library! Not more weary to the soul of the fainting traveller is the burning desert which the mirage had so lately adorned with verdant fields and limpid waters, than is many a barren waste of learning to the soul of him to whom, when viewed from some Pisgah of the imagination, it had appeared as a land flowing with milk and honey, the glory of all lands.

In my theological inquiries, I had contemplated Christianity as a system of truths to be harmonised, as a code of obligations to be enforced, and as a succession of events to be developed. I commenced with an earnest and devout examination of the sacred writings, and could have rejoiced to rest for ever within those green pastures, and beside those waters of comfort. But I soon perceived that he who would derive from that hallowed source lights to guide the feet of others into the paths of life, must borrow the means of illuminating the inspired pages from the intellectual stores of uninspired men. Nothing more easy than to despise and neglect interpreters. Nothing less possible than to advance a step without interpretation. Divine knowledge presupposes human knowledge. Without logic, criticism, languages, and (in the widest sense of the word) history, the Bible is a sealed book; unless, indeed, it be opened by

the aid of miracle. I was neither so indolent nor so presumptuous as to suppose that, by the mere bounty of nature, I possessed within myself all the necessary aids for the right understanding of Moses and of Isaiah, of Luke and of Paul. From those infallible teachers I passed, though not without many an anxious foreboding, to Eusebius and Fleury, to Augustine and Luther.

Launched on this troubled sea, how fearful were the disclosures forced upon me! If the annals of the world are but the records of crime and suffering, the chronicles of the Church have but little more alluring to reveal. How rapid the decline from the apostolic models!—how early the growth of the meanest superstitions!—how swift the triumphs of spiritual despotism!—how intimate, even in the first ages, the alliance of the perverted Gospel with the logomachies of Grecian philosophy, and the profane mysteries of heathen worship, and the pollutions of pagan idolatry! And, as the turbid stream descended to lower eras, how sadly was I constrained to recognise a real though deplorable reformation even in the establishment of the Papacy, and a merited chastisement of the foul crimes of Christendom by the sword of Mahommed and his followers, and by the hordes who, under the banners of Alaric and Attila, of Genseric and Odoacer, desolated the Latin Churches. I saw the long night of mediæval darkness yield at length to the day-spring from on high,—a day too soon to be overcast by persecutions which the Cæsars would have abhorred, and by wars envenomed by the bitterest religious animosities, until the combatants at length laid down their arms—the Catholics to subside into a licentious infidelity, the Protestants to yield up the

soul to Mammon, under the shelter of a lifeless orthodoxy, or of a merely human philosophy.

From contemplating the speculative errors and the practical misdeeds of the great multitude who, in former ages, had called and professed themselves Christians, I turned aside to survey the living societies who worship in that sacred name, not doubting that among them I should find the image of that New Jerusalem which it was permitted to the Prophet to see descending out of heaven. With this hope, I first applied myself to the perusal of the works of their Doctors. I did not, indeed, suppose that, in this modern theological literature, I should meet with any of those prodigies of industry and genius which had been produced by the Fathers of the Anglican Church and by the original Puritans. But I knew that I should discover in them the spirit of my own age; that all-controlling power, the dominion of which none may escape, and which, in my future calling, it would be inevitable that I should myself obey. To appreciate the theology of my own times, as impressed on the writings, or as breathing in the discourses of my contemporaries, was therefore to see, by anticipation, the general tendency and workings of my own mind, when I should be subsequently numbered among the ministers of the everlasting Gospel.

It was no attractive prospect. In vain I looked around for any profound investigations into the interior sense, and into the genuine readings, of the sacred text. I could meet with no interpreters of the connection between the recent developments of philosophy and science, and those progressive revelations of truth which have proceeded from God to man. The mines of Church History lay abandoned and unwrought. Nothing was undertaken, either to sustain

the foundations or to delineate the symmetry of the vast fabric of Christian doctrine. Nor was any fresh ground broken up on the wide field of morals, to satisfy the demands of an age prolific in political and social changes, and with every such change giving birth to problems, hitherto unexplained, of national and of personal duty.

But while seeking in vain among my contemporaries for guides or companions in such studies, I was constrained to encounter on every side the ill-favoured demon of religious, or rather of ecclesiastical controversy. When I would have scaled the heights of divine knowledge, I was called away to listen to some acrimonious dispute upon the rights, the symbols, and the government of Christian societies. From the celestial path which I desired to ascend, the din of such debates would continually drag me down, to witness and lament the mean jealousies, the petty passions, and the disingenuous artifices of earthly disputants.

Generations long since passed away, had transmitted to the generation to which I myself belonged, the interminable strife between the hierarchy of the Elizabethan and the democracy of the Puritan churches. The reluctant but inevitable attention which I bestowed on this hereditary feud, contributed to my belief in the duality of my own nature. War was declared within me between my judgment and my imagination. To the advocates of dissent, I awarded the praise of maintaining the better cause and of supporting it with the weightier reasons. To their antagonists, I assigned the merit of conducting the war of words with the greater dignity, or, shall I say, with less repulsive querulousness. Sophistry and rancour can assume a not ungraceful veil, and

put on many specious disguises, when associated with wealth and rank and other social distinctions. The asperities of my own party could boast of no such embellishments. The episcopal charge and the congregational pamphlet, emulated each other in bitterness and wrong. But in the courteous composure with which he inflicted pain, the advantage was ever on the side of the mitred belligerent. My conscience, indeed, condemned alike either form of malevolence; but my taste was far more grievously offended by the aspect it bore among the advocates of my own system. The ascendant power could affect to be compassionate and serene. The depressed body could not cease to be sore and acrimonious. A dissenter is seldom disposed, and is still more rarely permitted, to forget that he *is* a dissenter. The habitual sense of wrong is among the most unamiable and unalluring of the tempers with which man is afflicted.

Quitting the arena in which the polemics of the nineteenth century fought, I turned to the temples in which they assembled. Even there, alas! raged the conflict within me, or rather between the inmate of the one lobe of my brain, who judicially approved, and the inhabitant of the other lobe, who fastidiously disliked, the services in which I joined. In the assemblies of those among whom I proposed, at some future time, to minister, my thoughts would wander from the parsimonious simplicity of their sacred edifices, from the obtrusive prominence of the leaders of their worship, and from their isolation in the great Christian commonwealth, to those august communions where the priesthoods of earth symbolise the hierarchies of heaven; where the successors, in unbroken lineage from the apostles, yet minister at their altars;

where the creeds and the collects of the first confessors of the faith still rise as incense at those venerable shrines, and where alone can thrive those severe but unobtrusive graces which have an exact subordination of ranks for their indispensable basis. From the long drawn prayer, offered, in no blest cadence, beneath a roof raised as in utter scorn of architecture, fancy would allure me away to listen to the chaunt of some ancient liturgy, floating down the fretted aisles of some cruciform cathedral; and truth would extort from me the acknowledgment, that the ascent of the human soul to the fountain of being, demanded other aids than are to be found among those who measure their approach to perfection by their distance from the models which, during fifteen centuries, had been reverenced throughout the universal church.

But as in the primitive, so in the Protestant churches, the Pulpit was the stronghold and chief buttress of the faith; and to the pulpit I resolved to address my most assiduous attention, convinced that it would yet be found to maintain its primeval supremacy in detecting error, in enlarging the powers and the range of thought, in applying the divine oracles to all the purposes of human life, and in quickening every holy, and kind, and generous emotion. I had, indeed, neither the expectation nor the wish to hear that honeyed discourse which steeps the soul in self-forgetfulness. I remembered that Christianity was for the daily use of homely people. I knew that truth, when appearing among men in her severe and native majesty, would reject the trivial succour of rhetorical arts and of elaborated periods. 'From her chosen throne, and from the lips of her consecrated ministers, she will discourse' (I said) 'of the highest interests of

time and of the glories of eternity, with an eloquence of which the mere words will be unheeded alike by the speaker and by the hearer. Her weapons of heavenly temper and resistless edge, must still be triumphant in their native energy, however feeble may be the arm which wields them. What, then, will not be their power, in hands diligently trained to their use, and instinct with that spiritual life in which alone we truly live.'

With such hopes I listened, and on the basis of such anticipations I judged. Honeyed discourse! elaborate periods! artificial eloquence! No, verily. The severest censor can prefer no such charge against the pulpits of the nineteenth century. Malignity itself cannot accuse them of beguiling us by the witchcraft of genius. They stand altogether clear of the guilt of torpifying the disordered heart by the anodynes of wit or fancy. Abstruse and profound sophistries are not in the number of their offences. It is a mere calumny to accuse them of lulling the conscience to repose by any syren songs of imagination. If the bolts of divine truth are diverted from their aim, it is no longer by enticing words of man's wisdom. Divinity fills up her weekly hour by the grave and gentle excitement of an orthodox discourse, or by toiling through her narrow round of systematic dogmas, or by creeping along some low level of schoolboy morality, or by addressing the initiated in some mythic phraseology; but she has ceased to employ such tongues as those of Chrysostom and Bourdaloue. The sanctity of sacred things is lost in the familiar routine of sacred words. Religion has acquired a set of technical terms and conventional formulas; somnolent and sleep-compelling. Her pulpits bear the stamp and impress of an age, in which the art of writing

has proved fatal to the power of thinking; when the desire to appropriate gracefully has superseded the ambition to originate profoundly; when the commercial spirit envelopes and strangles genius in its folds; when demigods and heroes have abandoned the field, and the holiest affections of the heart die away in silence, and the ripest fruits of the teeming mind drop ungathered into the reaper's bosom; an age of literary democracy and intellectual socialism, in which no bequests are made to remote posterities, and no structures are rising to command and break the universal mediocrity.

Such was the view of ancient and of modern Christianity disclosed to me by history and by my own observation. Unextinguished, indeed, by the mephitic vapours into which it has been plunged, that celestial lamp has never ceased to illuminate and to gladden many a lowly heart; but from those eminences on which it should have shone as a light to lighten the nations, it has emitted a radiance for the most part faint and flickering, and but rarely to be seen in its pure and native lustre. I had acquired a new and more earnest love and reverence for the sacred volume, not only for its own surpassing excellency, but for the contrast in which I found it to stand to the corruptions of former ages, and to the languor and feebleness of my own. Gladly would I have joined the great company of the preachers, if my lot had been thrown in those days when, in the strength of their divine mission, they overthrew the imperial idolatry; or in those times when an awakened world caught from their lips the cry of resistance to sacerdotal tyranny; or even in that later generation when, in my own land, an Erastian prelacy and their satellites fell down before them. But to swell the chorus

of formality; to 'do duty' in a listless congregation; to be the admired and the caressed of fashionable connoisseurs in divinity, or to wage a puny war with timid critics and delicate objectors!—it was not in my nature. Better far, I judged, to engage in some secular pursuit, where, freely measuring my strength with my competitors, I might, perhaps, rise to an elevation from which I could influence, if not control, the destinies of one of the great families of mankind.

For those of our well-educated youth who have neither the interest to become placemen, the genius to live by art, nor the capital required for commerce, it remains to minister to the sick in mind, in body, or in estate. My abandonment of the clerical life narrowed my choice to the two last of those pursuits. I might not improbably have been a physician, if the loathsome duties of the hospital and the dissecting-room could have been dispensed with. But that being impossible, I quitted my parental home for the remote and busy world in which the unjoyous science of special pleading is taught to the future aspirants to the dignities of the coif.

At this distance of time I never tread the flagstones of Fig-tree Court, in the Inner Temple, without feelings akin to those with which Gil Blas revisited the scene of the therapeutic labours in which he assisted the learned Dr. Sangrado. With what eagerness did I join in the onslaught on the purses and the reputations of mankind, under the guidance of the atrabilious skeleton, my tutor, whose keen eye twinkled from its deep socket, as it lit on a point of law, fatal to some unlucky litigant! To lie down at night with the conviction that, since day-break, I had been working harder than any other intellectual

operative in London, was, in those times, among my luxuries. It was a sturdy and invigorating discipline. It taught me a logic of more practical utility than I could have acquired at Edinburgh or at Oxford. If the pleadings which I drew, in those murky chambers, contributed (as is but too probable) to damage any honest man, they were at least of singular advantage to myself. They placed a curb on a vagrant imagination, and prepared me for controversies far more perilous than the interminable hostilities between John Doe and Richard Roe, in which I was then so zealous a partisan.

At the end of my noviciate, I took the gown, and, like other barristers, traversed Westminster Hall, swinging to and fro an empty bag. As my eye wandered from the plump, curly-headed cherubs on the roof, to the wan and troubled visages, enveloped in powdered wigs, below, I fancied that the architects of William Rufus, gifted with a second sight of the Aula-Regia of the Georgian era, had carved those chubby angels in a good-humoured mockery of us all. For I soon learnt that in her glorious temple, the worship of Themis was conducted by a priesthood, whose spirit was but too accurately expressed by those corroded countenances. Incessantly eulogising the incorruptibility of the Bench, the honour of the Bar, and the respectability of the Attorneys, they were incessantly depreciating each individual of each of those goodly fellowships. Faint, indeed, was the resemblance between the original, or Mosaic Decalogue, and that 'various reading' of it, by which the professional morality of our *gens togata* was regulated. Apologies, which would have been torn to shreds by their acuteness, if preferred on behalf of any *Prisoner* at the bar, were admitted by the *Gentlemen* at the

Bar, to justify their own acceptance of unearned and excessive fees, to vindicate the calling evil good and good evil, and to excuse the underhand game played by opposing advocates, for their own ease and profit, at the expense of their helpless and ignorant clients. It was a life of rude familiarity, of bitter jealousy, and of ceaseless gossip. There was not one of the twelve judges, or of the leading counsel, whose character escaped daily dissection, by half a score of those learned anatomists. Over the gate of Westminster Hall was the inscription, visible, at least, to my own eyes, 'All ye who enter here abandon modesty.' I found that it was well to possess virtue, talents, scholarship; well to know some little law; well to be eloquent; and better still to be closely connected with attorneys and their clients; but that the one thing needful was intrepid assurance, animated by constitutional vivacity. So gifted, knavery, ignorance, and incapacity fattened. Without this gift, worth, learning, and genius starved. What the plain of Elis was to Greece, such is that venerable Hall to England; and its Pindar must sing of combatants, who have rejoiced in the dust, the sweat, the strife, and the turmoil of the contests. His heroes must be painted with thick skins and hardy consciences, buoyant and fearless, prompt in resources, and unscrupulous in the use of them. No place or vocation there for men of pensive spirits, delicate nerves, and high-wrought sensibilities! When my mind at length opened to this great truth, I threw aside my unprofitable gown, repeating the old exclamation, 'What business have I at Rome — I cannot lie!"

I next turned for employment to the other ancient halls of Westminster. Topics of deep and stirring interest were then engaging the attention of parlia-

ment. These I diligently studied; and in due time I despatched to one of the most celebrated London newspapers, a series of articles, designed to support the advocates of freedom, and to disperse the mists which had been purposely raised, to darken and to distort their policy. My papers found acceptance, and their author encouragement. But that 'blest folio of four pages, which not even critics criticise,' existed only in the imagination of William Cowper. Never was an author's self-esteem exposed to a keener torture than that to which I was subjected. My editorial censor and I had nothing in common but the advocacy of the same political opinions. In every thing else we were as far asunder as the poles. Yet, in half an hour, he would completely assimilate to his own style of thought and diction, any of my most elaborate performances. The substance remained, but the form was absolutely new. My facts, arguments, and conclusions reappeared in their original order, but all my candid acknowledgments and cautious qualifications had vanished away. My long and stately sentences had become terse and pungent. The periods which had fallen from my pen blushing, like so many moss roses, with the rich glow of humanity, now bristled with points like so many cactuses. Their graceful structure was broken up into epigram and antithesis. My grave censures had passed into stinging sarcasms, and some equivocal jest from 'Roderick Random,' had thrust out an exquisite quotation which I had drawn from 'Comus.'

Smarting under this strange transmutation, though amazed at the facility and the skill with which it was executed, I sought and obtained an interview with my Procrustes. A transient access of the spirit of James Boswell, has enabled me to record, for the

benefit of others, the explanations which I then received from him. 'Adept as you are in many studies' (such was the complimentary commencement), 'you are but a tyro in the mystery of journalism. It is not a science, but a trade. Morals, philosophy, and patriotism are our raw materials, and must be got up to the taste of our customers. The worthy haberdasher at the next door, cannot watch the turns of the market more anxiously than we do. Fashion is the supreme arbiter with us as with him. From that tribunal neither he nor we have an appeal to any higher. What have Ephemera to say to Posterity? To satisfy the demands of fashion, we must both pass our wares through many successive hands —he, his ribands, we, our articles; the last hand, in either case, being that which gives to the commodity its gloss or bloom. You, my good sir, may be considered as the weaver, I as the hotpresser of the piece-goods we have on sale. You will excuse my freedom, but the fabric, when fresh from your loom, is either flattened down to the homiletical, or wrought up to the poetical, or clouded by the metaphysical tone of colouring. From my hand it receives the shape, the polish, and the tint, demanded by the coffee-room or the club. For every purpose, there is a time, a place, and a propriety. If either Locke or Milton had edited a newspaper, he would have discussed the interests and the duties of mankind slashingly, bitingly, and comically. His own interest, and his duty to his proprietors, would have made him aim at a wide and immediate sale, by winning the suffrages of the idle, the frivolous, and the malignant, multitude.'

'Enough,' I exclaimed, in imitation of Rasselas. 'Thou hast convinced me that no one who aspires to

be a teacher of mankind, can ever be a newspaper editor.' 'It is indeed,' he replied, after Imlac, 'exceedingly difficult.' 'So difficult,' I rejoined, in the words of the Prince of Abyssinia, 'that I will have nothing more to do with his labours.' At once, and for ever, I abandoned all concern in this political haberdashery. The whole tribe of party writers, diurnal and hebdomadal, now appeared to me in a new and a truer light. Like a flight of obscene birds, they overshadowed my path, polluting by their touch, and distorting by their dissonance, those researches into the state of the commonwealth, and the social duties of mankind, on which I desired to bestow a serene and unbiassed attention. My heart assured, and my observation convinced me, that both the leaders and the subalterns of contending factions, were far wiser and better men than they appeared in those clever, reckless, and uncharitable sketches, thrown off from day to day, by writers agitated by ceaseless excitement, condemned to mercenary toil, and excluded from the blessings of studious leisure, and of self-acquaintance.

'When injured Thales bids the town farewell,' the less he says or thinks of his wrongs the better. I quitted the great city with no injustice, real or imaginary, to resent. Fortune, indeed, had not smiled on my efforts; but neither had I wooed her smiles with much ardour or perseverance. Early in life, and with a mind unruffled by disappointment, I retired to scenes in which I might reasonably hope to reconcile my own tranquillity with the faithful discharge of active duties, at least as useful and as honourable as those which I had declined. There I resolved to labour in educating the young, and in instructing the adult of my own generation, not without some cheerful

hope of audience from generations yet to be born. My pupils would not prevent my pursuing those literary designs which must have perished beneath the shade of the pulpit, the bar, or the daily journals. A school had not deterred the Head of the younger House of Bourbon from aspiring to the noblest of European thrones, nor Samuel Johnson from claiming the moral Dictatorship of England, nor Milton from scaling the Seventh Heavens.

In a rural retreat (the beauties of which nature has left to be detected by the assiduity, perhaps to be created by the imagination, of such as dwell there) I became a tutor, a husband, and a father. The blessings shed over my path by the two last of those relations has, I am told, imparted to my writings a deeper glow of domestic tenderness than might have been expected, from the almost feminine reserve and delicacy which my critics have laid to my charge. If so, I am at least not intentionally criminal. An old bachelor, like the author of the 'Task,' or an old debauchee, to whom love and reverence are incongruous ideas, like the author of the 'Social Contract,' may, though for very different reasons, be induced to throw open the sanctuary of home to the gaze of the inquisitive; but I have neither their temptation nor their excuse for such loquacity. With those hallowed secrets of my heart, the stranger intermeddleth not, if I can help it.

My library is another matter. Any one is free to inspect, and, if it must be so, to envy it. Mine is no bibliomaniac collection. There is not a volume there which is not either in active service, or enjoying a well-earned repose as a faithful veteran. My teachers, my companions, my comforters, my playfellows, my fellow-labourers, and sometimes my antagonists, but always the cherished inmates of my house, there

they stand, my much loved books, eloquent or silent at my bidding, pleasant when I am pleased, melancholy when I am sad, animating when I am languid, leaving no sorrow unsoothed, no mood and temper of my mind unexpressed, no science uninterpreted, no art unadorned, — bringing me into hourly intercourse with all the noblest spirits who have sojourned in this world, and with those whom the Author of all worlds has inspired to give us some intimations of our origin, our destiny, and our hopes.

In that presence-chamber I reigned the monarch of many a well-peopled province, giving audience in turn to each of my many-tongued subjects, and exacting from them all a tribute at my pleasure. There might be seen, supreme in favour as in place, a venerable copy of the Jewish and Christian Scriptures. A troop of tall, sad-coloured folios, the depositaries of the devout exercises and anxious self-searchings of the Puritan divines, was drawn up on shelves within reach of my outstretched arm. With but little more effort it could light on a tribe of more lofty discourse, bred in the sacred solitudes of Port Royal, yet redolent of the passion of their native land for an imposing and fanciful exterior. Honest George Latimer, with a long line of episcopal and episcopalian successors, held a position a little too prominent perhaps, yet due to their unrivalled worth and beauty, not less than to their aristocratic pretensions. But the main power of my state consisted in a race of ancient lineage and obsolete tongues, beginning with Clement, Hermas, and Irenæus, and so onward through the long series of Greek and Latin fathers, ecclesiastical historians, acts of councils and of saints, decretals, missals, and liturgies, all in turn casting their transient lights and their deep shadows over the checkered fortunes of the

Christian Church. Brought within the precincts of my wide dominion, Homer, Æschylus, Dante, Shakspeare, and the humbler partakers of their inspiration, awaited at a greater distance my occasional summons. But perhaps in their reverend aspect might be perceived something which confessed that they were not among my habitual and chosen companions. Court favour here, as elsewhere, may have been a little too diffusive and capricious; and writers on physiology, astronomy, plants, insects, birds, and fishes, shared with metaphysicians, moralists, and the writers of civil history, the hours occasionally withdrawn by their ruler from more serious intercourse with his apostolic, patristic, papal, and reformed counsellors. In short, it was one of those chambers which he who can securely possess, quietly enjoy, and wisely use, may in sober truth pity the owners of Versailles and the Escurial.

There I conceived, and there I partly executed, the great labour of my literary life. Deep as was the shadow which my earlier inquiries threw over the progress of Christianity down the turbid stream of time, my more mature researches had but enhanced the gloom. I resolved, therefore, to become the author of a book, which, in its complete form, might perhaps be called 'Ecclesiastical Nosology, or the Morbid Anatomy of the Church.' It was designed 'to exhibit at one view the principal forms of spurious religion.' These consisted either first of the unavowed scepticism which believes nothing; or secondly, of the credulity which believes any thing; or thirdly, of the enthusiasm which believes at the bidding of the imagination; or fourthly, of the fanaticism whose belief is the offspring of the morose and vindictive passions; or fifthly, of the spiritual despotism which exacts a

belief (or the profession of a belief) determined not by conviction, but by authority; or sixthly, of the corruption of morals generated by each of these substitutes for the simplicity of the Christian faith. Here, then, was an analysis of my general subject, giving promise of six distinct volumes, which collectively were to form a comprehensive, though not a very Utopian, series of lectures on the perversions of the Gospel in a sinful and deluded world.

Machiavelli, Bossuet, and Montesquieu were to be my models. Like them, I hoped to throw broad masses of light on the principles by which the various synchronisms and sequences of human affairs may be cemented into one comprehensive whole. Like them, I proposed to extract philosophy from chronicles, and to elevate annals into history. Like them, I resolved to relieve the dulness of the didactic style by narrative, but to render narrative entirely subordinate to the proof and illustration of doctrine. But neither 'The Prince,' 'The Universal History,' nor 'The Roman Greatness and Decay,' could supply me with a model of style. Our national taste (so at least I judged) demanded a prose more richly inlaid with ornament, and cadences more various, intricate, and harmonious than theirs. I would learn from those great masters how to erect theories; but from Dugald Stewart how to construct paragraphs.

I commenced the execution of my scheme by my 'Natural History of Enthusiasm'—the work from which my literary peerage derives its title. My success, if not splendid, was at least decisive and encouraging. I had not, on the whole, much right to complain of my critics. Some of them indeed turned my own guns upon me; purloining from one half of my book, the materials with which they assailed the

other half; and with one voice they rebuked my diction as stately, redundant, and obscure. But they all assigned to me the praise of having imparted a definite shape to some momentous questions, which till then had been floating up and down in the form of loose popular discourse, and of having given a sound, if not a perfect, solution to the problems I had raised. My incognito contributed to my popularity; and in my retreat I enjoyed the double pleasure of revising several editions of my history, and of hearing of the various speculations which ascribed it to as many different pens. I perceived that fame was within my grasp, and I was convinced that it might be secured and extended by the honest art of promulgating salutary, though unwelcome, truths. Had I wanted motives for perseverance in my task, this conviction would have furnished them.

Accordingly, at no distant intervals, I committed to the press two more of the six main divisions of my 'Ecclesiastical Nosology.' But neither my 'Essay on Fanaticism,' nor my 'Treatise on Spiritual Despotism,' enjoyed the favour, or attracted the notice, which had been bestowed on their elder brother. Some indeed there were, who gave to the last a decided preference over the rest of the series. But it is impossible to deny that their reception was cold and indifferent, when compared with that of my first-born. This may be partly ascribed to the dropping of my vizor, and the consequent secession of the mere mystery hunters, and partly, perhaps, to the public ear being cloyed by a style too rhythmical and inflated; but chiefly (I think) to an error in my original design, which was brought but too distinctly to light by this repeated and frequent recurrence to it.

I discovered that my undertaking was too austere, and my colours too dark to satisfy the popular taste.

Three copious volumes of grave censure, relieved by no digressions into gayer or more animating topics, was, I found, more than mortal monitor might hazard, and more than offending mortals would endure. I reflected, though not till too late, that all the masters of the objurgatory art had been accustomed to medicate their reproofs with various condiments of verse, or wit, or pleasantry, or pathos. I now remembered that the satirists themselves had been but flatterers in disguise, by indirectly ascribing to those whom they addressed, their own abhorrence (genuine or assumed) of the crimes which they denounced; that even Juvenal supposes the moral sentiment of his readers to be virtuous and uncontaminated, and that each of them probably appropriated the fierce invective of the poet to his neighbour, the implied compliment to himself. It now, also, occurred to me, that some honest and respectable prejudices might have been wounded by the gloom which my disquisitions threw over the general character of the Christian world; and that many simple hearts might have thought themselves conducted, under my guidance, to the brink of a fearful inference, to be avoided only by the desertion of their guide. Such reflections came too late to obviate the fundamental error of my design, but soon enough to prevent the completion of it. My 'Morbid Anatomy of Spurious Religion' remains an unfinished fragment.

I was disappointed, but not discouraged. The impulse which urged me to participate in the great debates of my age and country, was too powerful to be thwarted or restrained. My faith in myself, in the truths I sought to inculcate, and in the support from on high, of which the devoted advocates of truth are assured, never failed me; and I contemplated from my retreat, with unabated interest, the great intellectual

movements of the world from which I had withdrawn. They separated, as it seemed to me, into two currents, moving in opposite directions, and with conflicting purposes.

The tendency of the first was to degrade man's noblest works and faculties into toys for the pastime of a luxurious generation — to convert poetry into a mere vehicle for novels in rhyme — history into a quarry for romance — the drama into an apology for scene-painters, songsters, and buffoons — philosophy into an embellishment of periodical garrulities — and theology itself into the art of rescuing certain sabbatical hours from dulness, or from sleep. The rival stream took its rise from Castalian fountains. To Samuel Taylor Coleridge and William Wordsworth might justly be given the title of fathers of their country, because in their minds first germinated the ideas which determined the character of no insignificant part of the nation to which they belonged. They taught some two or three of their disciples to think. They taught to a vast multitude, the use of a phraseology which has become an admirable counterfeit and substitute for thought — a style in which the colloquial freedoms of the stage are employed to set off the apothegmatic sententiousness of Burke, the shapeless abstractions of the Schlegels, and the traditional doctrines and maxims of the Vatican. In this motley dialect, men of large pretensions to learning laid claim to the high office of the teachers and benefactors of the world; while they contemptuously denounced the effeminate spirit which, like Cleopatra dissolving her pearls in her goblet, was desecrating all art and human knowledge into the recreation of an idle hour, and employing divine knowledge to feed a corrupt, effete, and emasculate rhetoric.

All my sympathies were at first with those who thus contended against the debasement of learning to frivolous and unworthy ends; even though they themselves were sublimating whatever they knew or thought, into a gaseous poetry. But the passage proved to be but short from these exercises of the imagination to some of its most fatal disorders. The theological poets, and the poetical theologians of Oxford, were continually approaching nearer to a communion with the theatrical ritual of Rome, to the adoration of her demigods, and to the adoption of her creeds. From the dark, though inspired oracles at the Lakes, they had learnt to tread that enchanted ground on which every thing, however homely, becomes significant of the holiest things. From this poetical worship of nature in her humblest forms, they had advanced towards the actual worship of the superhuman objects which those forms seemed to them to symbolise. A soaring enthusiasm for the beautiful, had proved the entrance into a grovelling superstition.

My spirit was stirred within me as I watched this growing decline from the faith of the Reformers. Nonconformist as I was, the Church of England was scarcely more dear to the most zealous of her sons than to me. Keen as was my perception of her errors, I regarded her not only as the indispensable support, but as the indispensable head, of the great Protestant league of Christendom, — as the one body possessing the cohesion, the stability, the learning, the temporal power, and the long tradition of illustrious names which could be opposed to the similar pretensions of the great Roman confederacy. I bethought me, that in her defence I might myself go forth to the combat with the Goliaths of Oxford, with the greater advantage, because without the

incumbrance of cope, or gown, or surplice. I was beyond the reach of those arguments *ad homines*, by which such as wore them were but too successfully assailed. Acknowledging no canon but that of scripture, nor any creeds but such as could be deduced from that source, nor any saint whose apotheosis is not there recorded, I was free to reject all appeals to ancient Christianity and to modern liturgies, and to esteem as a liar, every man whose teaching was opposed to the truth of God.

Notwithstanding my antipathy to periodical literature, the tactics of the enemy and the habits of the times compelled me to adopt that mode of publication. Thus I became the author of a series of Tracts, which opened with a lecture to the Ultra-Protestants, who, in their zeal for 'the Bible only,' repudiate the authority of the Primitive Church, even as to matters of fact which passed under their eyes, and even as to the meaning of words which were vernacular in their mouths. I next proceeded to show that superstition, priestcraft, and theosophy, had, like deadly creepers, stunted the early growth, and poisoned the first fruits of that tree which, springing as from a grain of mustard seed, was destined to cast forth her branches to the ends of the earth, — that the Mariolatry of Tertullian had been quite as extravagant as that of Bernard, — that the virgins of the age of Cyprian had rivalled, in licentiousness, the nuns of the age of Dominic, — that the Doctors of the first four centuries had substituted a Gnostic Deity at war with matter, for the Deity of the Gospels at war only with sin, — that Chrysostom, Basil, and the two Gregories, in the east, and Ambrose in the west, had either excluded, from their teaching and from their creeds, the first great principle of the Gospel, or had exhibited it in an order and position the very

reverse of that which is assigned to it by the inspired writers, — that virginity, fasting, and almsgiving had been placed, by patristic divinity, on the thrones erected by Paul to Faith, and Hope, and Charity, — that with no difference but that of names, the same dæmons were worshipped in the Pagan and in the Christian temples of the fourth century, — that many of the most illustrious among the anchorites of the East, and the Cœlibates of the West, had better merited cells in some House of Correction, than niches in the gallery of ecclesiastical hèroes, — that the greatest Saints and Doctors of that age had sanctioned pious frauds, which, in our own times, would have conducted their authors to the treadmill, — that Ambrose had been an impostor, Chrysostom the promoter of a cheat, and Augustine a teacher of what he must have known to be false, — that Popery had been a reformation of ancient Christianity, — that the theology of Mahommed and his caliphs had been superior to that which they overthrew at Antioch and Alexandria, — and that Attila was an avenger of crimes rivalling those of the Egyptian mysteries. I next advanced to the proof of the Protestantism of the Anglican Church, and showed how in her liturgies, her articles, and her homilies, she had raised her voice against the errors and corruptions, not of Rome merely, but of the Churches which twice sent their Bishops to hold a general synod at Nicæa; and, warming with my own movement, I closed my assault on the religion of the third and fourth centuries, by an unsparing exposure of the inconsistencies and the blunders committed by Ridley, and Jewell, and Bucer, in their awkward attempts to shelter their allegiance to the Apostles by an appeal, alike unsuccessful and unfair, to the authority of the Fathers.

Of all the labours of my literary life, this was the most arduous, and the most immediately effective; as it was certainly not the least popular. But a writer will seldom be left by his critics in ignorance of such of his faults as lie on the surface. I was charged with some few oversights in my translations from my Greek originals; and admonished that I had failed in the reverence due to names had in honour by fifty generations; and warned, that truth would admit, and that justice required, some mitigation of my censures on the morals of their contemporaries. Censors of another class distinguished between the style of my successive numbers, condemning the earlier as turgid and diffuse, and ascribing only to the latter the freedom and vivacity requisite in controversial writing. They imputed to me a disregard of method and of logical sequence in the evolution of my argument; and taunted me with having paid the penalty of the periodical literature I had so warmly condemned, by myself sacrificing to immediate effect, materials and researches which, with greater leisure, and in a more tranquil mood, I might have wrought (so they were pleased to add) into a comprehensive and enduring commentary on the works, the doctrines, and the lives of the Fathers of the first five centuries.

Whatever may have been the fairness of these strictures on my 'Ancient Christianity,' it was honoured by one result more than sufficient to countervail them all. The great leader of the hostile forces undertook to refute my accusations against Ambrose, and for that purpose republished some chapters of the 'Ecclesiastical History of Fleury,' preceded by an 'Essay on Miracles' from his own pen. To vindicate the honesty and the prodigies of the Saints, he was fain to rely on the alleged antecedent probability that some such marvels as those ascribed to Ambrose

would be performed by some such person, at some such time, and in some such manner, and was driven to assert that the vast majority of the mighty works recorded in the Old Testament and the New, must stand or fall on the same narrow basis. For the first time in my life, I was able to enter into the exultation with which Samuel Johnson had exclaimed, 'Sir, I reduced him to whistle.' After a brief interval, the same antagonist bore a yet more conclusive testimony to the truths I had inculcated. In his new character of a Roman Catholic he inculcated them himself! He published an octavo volume to verify all I had said of the wide interval between the patristic and the apostolic doctrine, and attempted to deduce from the dogmas of Rome a solution of the problem I had proposed of finding a law by which developements of primitive truths into new forms might be distinguished from each other as genuine and as false. A treacherous ally, thus converted into an avowed ememy, ceased to be formidable. I gladly laid down my controversial pen, and turned aside, from the exhausted debates with the Church of Rome, to pursuits far better suited to my temper and more grateful to my taste.

By the benignity of a kind Providence I lived like the patriarchs of old, surrounded by the young, and especially by my own offspring. Alas! for the Doctors placed by irrevocable vows beyond the reach of those fountains of love and of wisdom. My pupils and my children were my habitual study, as well as the daily joy and interest of my existence. For their instruction or delight, I threw off numberless pages, in print or manuscript, for which, beyond that gay circle, I sought neither eulogist nor reader; though, for the benefit of other schools and nurseries,

I ultimately published one of them — 'An English Version of Herodotus,' with such omissions only as are needed to make his reception in a Christian household as decorous as it must ever be cordial. Thus my second childhood was separated by no long interval from my first; for there I was, the eldest, the gravest, and the least agile, indeed, of the jocund group, but hardly less captivated than they were by the lessons and the frolic of the passing hour. And when my little ones were hushed into repose, the incidents of their bright and busy lives would adjust themselves in my mind in the form of a connected narrative, compared with which I found the delightful tales of the great Father of History himself uninteresting. 'Feed my lambs,' was nearly the latest injunction which fell from the lips of Him of whom the whole family both in heaven and earth is named. If obedience to his more arduous precepts, in the spirit of a stern self-denial, is never unrewarded, even in this life, by peace and joy, how exuberant the springs of happiness opened to those on whom is laid a law, to which the first and deepest instincts of their nature are continually responsive!

With me, by this time, to meditate was to write. If I could have so far yielded to the levities of the day, or to its coarseness, as to have laid bare the recesses of my home to the public gaze, there were before me materials for a domestic novel, to which a touch far inferior to that of Rousseau, might have imparted an interest far superior to that of his Emilius. But I could just as soon have delivered over my body as an *anatomie vivante* to the surgeons for dissection. Reversing the ordinary method of conveying moral precepts under the veil of narrative, I told my tale in the form of precepts, leaving

my readers to resolve as they might, the admonitions I laid before them into the very scenes which, as I wrote, were lying before myself — the quiet English country house, the affectionate and not unlearned parents, the group of boys and girls, gay, docile, and intelligent, each exhibiting some well-discriminated mental powers, to the slow though complete developement of which, the pursuits of each were steadily and patiently directed.

My book on 'Home Education,' was received rather with cordiality by the few than with applause from the many. My self-constituted judges were resolved to believe that I had been surveying not the very England in which we live, but the Utopia in which Sir Thomas More once sojourned. Admitting that, beneath the tranquil shelter of such a house as I had unconsciously sketched, many a youth and many a maid might have been trained to adorn the land which gave them birth, they refused to admit the existence of such another abode north or south of Trent, except on the authority of a report to be first made to that effect by a commission of married men of six years' standing, at the least. What with managing constituents and turnpike trusts, writing sermons and prescriptions, meeting the hounds to-day and the Quarter Sessions to-morrow, an English country gentleman, whether clerical or laic, who should undertake the late developement of the 'ideality,' and the 'conceptive faculty,' and the 'sense of analogy' of his children, though he should address himself to the 'intuitive faculties' alone, and those 'gently stimulated by pleasurable emotions,' would, in a myriad of cases to one (such were the assertions and such the slighting quotations of my critics), end in something very different from the

promised result of 'putting their minds into a condition of intellectual opulence.' Here and there (they added) may, perhaps, be found such an Eden as the author of 'Home Education' has inhabited and described; where, exempt from the cares of earth, and in habitual communion with the Father of Lights, parents train their offspring 'to apprehend truth, to impart truth, and to discover truth.' But lovely as the scene might be, and profound as was the paternal love with which it was drawn (I am still quoting my censors), the Belvidere Apollo did not contrast more forcibly with an honest sportsman of our times, nor was the Godfrey of Tasso more unlike an officer of Her Majesty's Life Guards, than did the rural philosopher, who had indited my book, differ from the ten thousand respectable English gentlemen over whose country mansions fertile vines have crept, and whose tables are thickly set with olive branches.

Such is criticism! I have reflected much; I have written much; and much have I been taken to task for my writings. But a critic, in the current acceptation of that much abused term, I have never been. Nor, if I have an enemy, do I wish for him any heavier doom than that he should be inrolled and serve among that supercilious brotherhood, until he shall have learnt justly to appreciate his own position, and his own real importance, in the world of letters.

I gradually became review-proof; and, with very little concern for what the month or the quarter might bring forth in that way, I gave myself up to a series of contemplations on topics which had caught without arresting my notice, while I was engaged on my historical surveys, and in my polemical inquiries. Under the enigmatical title of 'Saturday Evening,' I sketched, in a series of essays, the

hopes and prospects of the Christian Church, her lapse from original purity, the fellowship of her members with each other, and their isolation as individuals, the limits of revealed knowledge, the dissolution of our nature, and its perpetuity, and the modes of our future existence. It was not in my nature to acquiesce tamely in any of the dogmatic systems of theology, definite as they were, and, therefore, cold, sterile, and earth-born. I aspired to reach that upper region which the pure light visits, and from which alone it is reflected in all its purity. I dared to propose to myself problems of which Butler might have surmised the solution; and of which Milton, when shut out from the sight of material things, might have discerned and depicted the latent glories. I attempted to scale eminences in the presence of which the mightiest become conscious of their weakness, and the boldest imagination is taught the penury of its resources. To throw some conjectural, unsteady, and precarious light on such themes, ultimately became the limit of my ambition and of my hopes. Yet I could not altogether abstain from the endeavour to climb heights and to penetrate depths undreamt of in our popular theology, and I applied myself, with whatever success, to themes which, when examined with reverence and freedom of thought, can never be unfruitful; though the fruits may often be unripe, and, to the great majority, distasteful.

Wise men read books that they may learn to read themselves, and for this purpose not seldom quit their libraries for the open air. The heath, the forest, or the river side is the true academy. There, with no intrusive neighbour to dissipate his thoughts, and with no importunate volume to chain them down, the student casts them into such forms of soliloquy

or dialogue, of verse or prose, as best suits the humour of the passing time. This peripatetic discipline is best observed under the cover of an angling rod, or a gun; for then may not the vicar or the major, without an evident breach of privilege, detain you on the county-rate question; nor can the gentler voice of wife or daughter upbraid you with the sad list of the visits you have received and neglected to return. Besides, your country philosopher is apt to flatter himself that, in hooking a trout, or flushing a pheasant, his eye is as true and his hand as steady as those of the squire; and from this weakness I was not altogether exempt. Emerging from my library as one resolved to bring home some score head of game, my stout purposes would gradually die away as I reached the brook, whose windings were oddly associated in my mind with theories with which the world was one day to be enlightened, and with half-conceived sections of essays yet to be written.

There is a great want of a treatise on the choice, the uses, and the treatment of hobby-horses. It would form a sort of connecting link between the libraries of useful and of entertaining knowledge. Scarcely a man (the made-up and artificial man alone excepted) who could not be laid under contribution for such a work. I could myself furnish a whole chapter. When it was not field day with me, and I had no exercises in divinity to perform, I descended from the great horse and ambled about, to my heart's content, on a favourite pad, which, however, it was my whim to dress in the housings of my tall charger, and to train to the same paces. In leisure hours, my appointed duty was to extract from Church History its pith and marrow; my habitual recreation

to construct schemes of physiology. I emulated the zeal with which 'my Uncle Toby' threw up his entrenchments, and Mr. Shandy his theories. My 'Home Education' was founded on a diligent survey of the formation of the brain. My solitary walks gave birth to a system in which was exhibited the future condition of man, when he shall be disencumbered of those viscous and muscular integuments which, in his present state, serve as a kind of sheath to protect the sentient soul within, from the intensities of delight or pain to which, without such a shelter, it would be exposed. Dwelling habitually on those scenes beyond the confines of earth, I became at last the possessor of a scheme, complete and coherent in all its parts, of that glorious futurity to which, in their cravings for immortal bliss, all men look forward, but which to nearly all presents itself only in a dim, shapeless, and unalluring outline.

I did not, however, make this attempt to burst through the barriers of time and space, without first tracing the steps of those who had preceded me in this daring adventure. First, and before all, I reverently consulted the inspired writers, among whose prerogatives it is not the least that, into whatever region of thought they pass, sound sense is still the attendant minister by whose aid they invariably ascend a region far beyond the morbid dreams of an excited fancy. Of such dreams, none had a firmer hold on the ancient sages of Greece and Italy, than the notion that, after death, man was to pass into a state of pure incorporeity, 'the naked ascending to the naked,' to be absorbed into the great mundane soul. In opposition to this dogma, the New Testament places human felicity, on either side of the grave, in the union of sound mind with a sound

body. The same creed, as Irenæus and Tertullian testify, was held by their immediate successors. Origen advanced further, and taught that to exist wholly detached and separate from matter, is the incommunicable attribute of Deity—that the 'spiritual body' of St. Paul is identical with the 'luciform body' of Plato — and that any created and subordinate mind destitute of such a covering, and of such an instrument, must be cut off from all commerce with things external, and degenerate into a mere contemplative, insulated, and inert entity.

With these earlier fathers of the Church, I found the later of that venerable order in unbroken harmony. In their copious inquiries into the nature of good and bad dæmons, they assign, indeed, to the angelic host the nearest possible resemblance, and to the evil spirits the greatest possible dissimilarity, to the 'defecated intelligences' of the schoolmen; and represent the first as impassive to sensual pleasures, and the others as inhaling, with an unholy relish, the savoury fumes of the heathen sacrifices; but they exhibit both, whether angels or devils, as still clad with some material integument, though it be subtilised to an indefinite and imponderable tenuity. From the same erudite doctors, and especially from St. Augustine, I learnt what is the manner in which the spiritual inhabitants of these ethereal vehicles hold intercourse with each other, and what are the shapes in which their presence is made manifest to those exquisite organs of sensation to which alone they are perceptible.

After thus mastering the discoveries of the patristic voyagers into the regions of the blessed, I turned to the other guides across that pathless ocean. One contemptuous glance at the Koran, and the Paradise

it reveals, was sufficient. I paused a while to contemplate the dark Homeric Hades peopled by the victims of the inexorable fate with which they had wrestled so bravely on earth. Over the Elysian fields of Virgil I saw satiety reigning in eternal and undisputed sway, and thought that the great poet had made an advantageous exchange, when, at the distance of thirteen centuries, he took up his abode on the outskirts of the Inferno, and made an occasional pilgrimage through its gloomy mansions. The awful magician whom he conducted to those abodes of woe, lost (as it seemed to me) much of his own inspiration when, consigned to the guidance of Beatrice, he traversed the seven heavens in her company, and listened, first in the Sun, and then in the Planet Jupiter, to the lectures of St. Thomas, and to the metaphysical comments on the mystery of the Divine decrees, delivered by the saints, congregated into the form of a celestial eagle.

From the poets I passed to the philosophers. In Cudworth and Brucker, I found a perfect analysis and interpretation of the doctrines of the schools, both ancient and modern, respecting the state of departed spirits; but the latitudinarian was as cold as the creed he professed, and the commentator as dry as the parchments among which he lived. I at length fell in with two volumes of far less pretensions than theirs, in which the post-sepulchral condition of man is delineated with an eloquence, a tenderness, and a warmth of heart worthy of such a theme. One of them was the treatise of Thomas Burnett, *De Statu Mortuorum et Resurgentium*. Burnett, it may be supposed, best knew his own strength and weakness, and therefore judged rightly in choosing scientific subjects, and in discussing them in a dead language; but to

the world at large, it must ever remain a mystery why he subjected to such fetters a mind which, as by some necessity of its nature, threw a gorgeous veil of impassioned poetry over every topic which it touched. My other conductor across the abyss which separates the living from the dead, was Abraham Tucker, the author of the 'Light of Nature,' a man unrivalled in the power of illustrating the obscure by the familiar, and blest with a mind so habitually gay, benevolent, and serene, that every page he has written is an undesigned and captivating reflection of his own happy temperament. I gladly soared away with him, in one of his atomic vehicles, to that boundless expanse in which he met the departed worthies of this world, shooting so pleasantly from star to star, conversing without the clog of words, putting forth at their will, organs with which to feel or to perceive all exterior objects, or retiring for meditation into a solitude which, when those organs were retracted, was utterly impregnable by any invader from without.

At the close of a winter's evening which had been passed in such company, and with such books, I drew my chair to my fire-side, and yielded myself passively to the incursion of the trains of thought to which my employment had given birth. At first they sustained themselves (like creepers hanging on a trellis-work) by the whimsical relations which they spontaneously formed with the dancing flames before me, and with the dark rocks, the illuminated caves, and the glowing pinnacles on which I was gazing. In the microcosm which blazed on my hearth, it was given to me to discover the present abodes of the former generations of mankind, and to watch them as they discharged the various offices which are there reserved for the departed. But, ere long, I ceased to see those mimic

mountains of man's future dwelling-place, and to explore the interminable vistas of light and shade by which they were perforated, or to hear the flapping of the fiery pennons which rose above their summits; for, while I was thus ruminating on the occupations of those who had passed through the gates of death, sleep had closed her portals on myself.

The time (so it seemed to me) had arrived at which I was to join the solemn troops and bright societies who people the eternal world. One universal bewilderment of thought, one passing agony, and all was still. I had emerged from the confines of life, and yet I lived. Time, place, and sensation were extinct. Memory had lost her office, and the activity of my reasoning powers was suspended. Apart from every other being, and entombed in the solitude of my own nature, all my faculties were absorbed and concentrated in one intense perception of self-consciousness. Before me lay expanded, as in a vast panorama, the entire course of my mortal life. I was at once the actor and the spectator of the whole eventful scene; every thought as distinct, every word as articulate, and every incident as fresh as at the moment of their birth. The enigmas of my existence were solved. That material and intellectual mechanism of which, for threescore years and ten I had been the subject, was laid bare, with all the mutual dependencies of the countless events, great and trivial, of my sublunary days. Grasping, at length, the threads of that vast labyrinth, I perceived that they had all been woven by the same Divine Artificer. At each step of the way by which I had come, I now traced the intervention of an ever-watchful Providence. Complicated and perplexing as the condition of human life had formerly appeared to me, I at length disco-

vered the great ultimate object to which each movement of that intricate apparatus had been designed to minister. I saw that the whole had been one harmonious and comprehensive scheme for purifying the affections of my nature, and invigorating them for nobler and more arduous exercises. I had gone down to Hades, and Deity was there. On earth His existence had been demonstrated by reasoning. Here it was felt by a consciousness intuitive and irresistible. A prisoner in the flesh, I had been wont to adore the majesty of the Creator. A disembodied spirit, I was awake to the conviction that He exists as the perennial source of happiness, which, concentrated in His own nature, is thence diffused throughout the universe, although in degrees immeasurably distant from each other, and according to laws unsearchable by any finite understanding. Thus imbibing knowledge of myself and of Deity, and alive only to the emotions inspired by this ever-present spectacle, I became the passive recipient of influences instinct with a delight so tranquil, and with a peace so unbroken, that weariness, satiety, and the desire for change appeared to have departed from me for ever.

Change, however, awaited me. So slight and imperfect was the alliance between my disembodied spirit and the world of matter, that, destitute of all sensation, I had lost all measure of time, and knew not whether ages had revolved, or but a moment had passed away during my isolated state of being. Heir to ten thousand infirmities, the body I had tenanted on earth had returned to the dust, there to be dissolved and recompounded into other forms and new substances. Yet the seminal principle of that mortal frame had adhered to me; and at the appointed season there brooded over it from on high a reproductive

and plastic influence. Fearfully and wonderfully as I had been made when a denizen of the world, the chemical affinities, and the complex organisation of my animal structure, had borne the impress of decay, of a transitory state, and of powers restricted in their free exercise. Passing all comprehension as had been the wisdom with which it was adapted to the purposes of my sublunary being, those purposes had been ephemeral, and circumscribed within precincts which now seemed to me scarcely wider than those within which the emmet plies her daily task. In the career which was now opening to me, I required a far different instrumentality to give scope to my new faculties, and to accomplish the ends to which I had learned to aspire. Emancipated from the petty cares and the mean pursuits in which, during the period of my humanity, I had been immersed, I now inhabited and informed a spiritual body, not dissimilar in outward semblance to that which I had bequeathed to the worms, but uniform in its texture, homogeneous in every part, and drawn from elements which were blended together into one simple, pure, and uncompounded whole. Into such perfect unison had my mental and my corporeal nature been drawn, that it was not without difficulty I admitted the belief that I was once again clothed with a material integument. Experience was soon to convince me that such an association was indispensable to the use and to the enlargement of my intellectual and moral powers.

Emerging from the region of separate spirits into my next scene of activity and social intercourse, I found myself an inhabitant of the great luminary, around which Mercury and his more distant satellites eternally revolve. In all their unmitigated radiance were floating around me, those effulgent beams of

light and heat which so faintly visit the obscure and distant planets. Everlasting day, the intense glories of an endless summer-noon, rested on the numbers without number of intelligent and sentient creatures who shared with me my new abode. Incorruptible, exempt from lassitude, and undesirous of repose, they imbibed energy from rays which, in the twinkling of an eye, would have dissipated into thin vapour the world and all that it inherit. On that opaque globe, the principles which sustain, and those which destroy life had been engaged within me in a constant but unequal conflict. The quickening spirit on earth, though continually recruited by rest and sleep, had at length yielded to the still-recurring assaults of her more potent adversaries. Here the vital powers had no foes to encounter, and demanded no respite from their ceaseless occupation. In the world below, from man the universal sovereign, to the animalculæ who people a drop of turbid water, I had seen all animated things sustaining themselves by the mutual extermination of each other. In the solar sphere I found all pursuing their appointed course of duty or enjoyment, in immortal youth and undecaying vigour. Death had found no entrance; life demanded no renewal.

I am anticipating the results of the observations which I gradually learned to make of the difference between solar and planetary existence; for on my first entrance into this untried state of being, my thoughts were long riveted to the change which I had myself undergone. While incarcerated in my tenement of clay, I had given law to my nerves, muscles, and tendons; but they had in turn imposed restraints on me against which it had been vain to struggle. My corporeal mechanism had moved in prompt obedience to each

successive mandate of my mind; but so fragile were the materials of which it was wrought, that, yielding to inexorable necessity, my will had repressed innumerable desires which, if matured into absolute volitions, would have rent asunder that frail apparatus. I had relaxed the grasp, and abandoned the chase, and thrown aside the uplifted weapon, as often as my overstrained limbs admonished me that their chords would give way beneath any increased impetus. And when the living power within me had subjected my fibres to the highest pressure which they could safely endure, the arrangement, and the relative position of my joints and muscles, had impeded all my movements, except in some circumscribed and unalterable directions. But my spiritual body, incapable of waste or of fracture, and responsive at every point to the impact of the indwelling mind, advanced, receded, rose or fell, in prompt obedience to each new volition, with a rapidity unimpeded, though not unlimited, by the gravitating influence of the mighty orb over the surface of which I passed. At one time I soared as with the wings of eagles, and at another plunged into the abysses of the deep. My spiritual body, the docile and indestructible instrument of my will, could outstrip the flight of the swiftest arrow, or rend the knotted oak, or shiver the primeval rocks; and then, contracting its efforts, could weave the threads of the gossamer in looms too subtle and evanescent for the touch of the delicate Ariel.

While on earth I had, like Milton, bewailed that constitution of my frame which, admitting the knowledge of visible objects only at one entrance, forbade me to converse with them except through the medium of a single nerve, and within the narrow limits of the retina. Had the poet's wish been granted,

and if, departing from her benignant parsimony, nature had exposed his sensorium to the full influx of the excitements of which it was inherently susceptible, that insufferable glare would either have annihilated the percipient faculty, or would have quickened it to agonies unimagined even by his daring fancy. Under the shelter of my earthly tabernacle, which at once admitted and mitigated the light, I had in my mortal state been accustomed to point my telescope to the heavens; and, while measuring the curve described round their common centre by stars which to the unaided eye were not even disunited, I had felt how infinitely far the latent capacities of my soul for corresponding with the aspect of the exterior world transcended such powers as could be developed within me by nature or by art. An immortal, I quaffed at my pleasure the streams of knowledge and of observation for which before I had thus panted in vain. I could now scan and investigate at large the whole physical creation. At my will I could call my visual powers into action to the utmost range of their susceptibility; for in my new body I possessed the properties of every different lens in every possible variety of combination — expanding, dissecting, and refracting at any required angle the beams which radiating from the various substances around me, it brought me intelligence of the forms, the colours, and the movements of them all. Assisted by this optical incarnation, I could survey the luminary on which I dwelt, the globes whose orbits were concentric there, and, though less distinctly, the other solar spheres which glowed in the firmament above me. Not more clearly had I deciphered during my sojourn on earth the shapes and hues of the various beings by which it is replenished, than I now

discerned the aspect and the movements of the countless species, animate and inanimate, with which the prodigal munificence of creative will has peopled the various planetary regions.

Nor was it through the intervention of light merely, that my new corporeity brought me into communication with the works of the Divine Architect. It attracted and combined for my study or my delight, all the vibratory movements, and all the gustatory and pungent emanations, by which the sense is aroused and gratified. Celestial harmony floated around me, and I breathed odours such as exhaled from Eden in the fresh dawn of the world's nativity. In that world, chained down by the coarse elements of flesh and blood, I had caught some transient glimpses of exterior things, through the five portals which opened — shall I say into my fortress, or my prison house? From the glorious mansion which my soul now inhabited, pervious to myself at every point, though secure from every hostile or unwelcome aggression, I surveyed the things around me in aspects till now unimagined. I did not merely see and hear, taste, smell, and feel, but I exercised senses for which the languages of earth have no names, and received intimations of properties and conditions of matter unutterable in human discourse. Employing this instrument of universal sensation, the inner forms of nature presented themselves before me as vividly as her exterior types. Thus entering her secret laboratories, I was present at the composition and the blending together of those plastic energies of which mundane philosophy is content to register some few of the superficial results. Each new disclosure afforded me a wider and still lengthening measure of that unfathomable wisdom and

power, with the more sublime emanations of which I was thus becoming conversant. Yet such was the flexibility of my spiritualised organs, that at my bidding they could absolutely exclude every influence from without, leaving me to enjoy the luxuries of meditation in profound and unassailable solitude.

While thus I passed along the solar regions, and made endless accessions of knowledge, I was at first alarmed lest my mind should have been crushed beneath the weight of her own conquests, and the whole should be merged in one chaotic assemblage of confused recollections. From this danger I was rescued by another change in my animal economy. During my planetary existence, the structure and the health of my brain had exercised a despotic authority over my intellectual powers. Then, my mind laboured ineffectually over her most welcome tasks, if accident or indigestion relaxed, distended, or compressed my cerebral vessels. For the time, the tools with which she wrought were deprived of their brightness and their edge. At such seasons (and they were frequent), the records of past sensations, and of the thoughts associated with them, became illegible in my memory, or could be read there only in disjointed fragments. An acid on his stomach would have rendered vain the boast of Cæsar, that he could address each of his legionaries by name. Even when all my pulses were beating with regularity and vigour, the best I could accomplish was to grope backward through my store of accumulated knowledge, holding by a single thread, to which my attention was confined, and the loss of which defeated all my efforts.

How different the tablets on which my observations of the past were recorded in my spiritual

body! Unconscious of fatigue, incapable of decay, and undisturbed by any of those innumerable processes essential to the conservation of mortal life, it enabled me to inscribe in indelible lines, as on some outstretched map, each successive perception, and every thought to which it had given birth. At my pleasure, I could unroll and contemplate the entire chart of my past being. I could render myself as absolutely conscious of the former, as of the present operations of my mind, and at one retrospective glance could trace back to their various fountains all the tributary streams which combined to swell the current of my immediate contemplations. Gliding over the various provinces of the solar world, and gathering in each new treasures of information, I deposited them all beyond the reach of the great spoiler Time, in this ample storehouse of a plenary memory. With the increase of my intellectual hoard my cravings for such wealth continually augmented. It was an avarice which no gains could satiate, and to the indulgence of which imagination itself could assign no limit.

I should, however, have become the victim of my own avidity for knowledge, if my ideas had still obeyed those laws of association to which, in my telluric state, they had been subject. Then it behoved my reason to exercise a severe and watchful government. When her control was relaxed, my thoughts would break loose from all legitimate restraint. They arranged themselves into strange groups and fantastic combinations, and established with each other such alliances as whim, caprice, or accident suggested. These once made were indissoluble. They asserted their power but too often, in resistance to the sternest mandates of my judgment and my will. But in times

of debility, of disease, or of sleep, my ideas would combine into heterogeneous masses, seething and mingling together, like the ingredients of some witch's caldron, assembled by her incantations to work out some still more potent spell. Over the whole of this intoxicating confusion presided Carnality, in all her nervous, cerebral, vascular, and other forms, and working by means of all her digestive, secretory, and assimilating processes.

Now, no longer the inmate of a tremulous and sordid tabernacle of flesh, but inhabiting a shrine pure and enduring as her own nature, my soul was rescued from this ignoble thraldom. Accident, appetite, lassitude, the heat and fumes of my animal laboratory, had ceased to disturb the supremacy of reason. Instead of congregating as an undisciplined host, my ideas, as in some stately procession, followed each the other in meet order and predetermined sequence, — their march unobstructed by any suggestions or desires originating in my sensuous frame. I had become, not the passive recipient of thought, but the unquestioned sovereign of my own mental operations. The material organs, by the aid of which I now wrought them out, obeyed a law like that on which depend the involuntary movements of the heart and arteries, unattended by any conscious effort, and productive of no fatigue. Every increment of knowledge spontaneously assumed in my memory its proper place and relative position; and the whole of my intellectual resources fell into connected chains of argument or illustration, which I could traverse at pleasure from end to end, still finding the mutual dependence and adhesion of each successive link unbroken.

To contemplate any truth in all the relations in which it stands to every other truth, is to possess

the attribute of omniscience; but, in proportion as any created intelligence can combine together her ideas in their various species, genera, classes, and orders, in the same degree is diminished the distance from the Supreme Mind, immeasurable and infinite as the intervening gulf must ever remain. On earth I had been compelled, by the feebleness of my cerebral and nervous economy, to render my studies almost exclusively analytical. There, I had toiled to disencumber every question of whatever might obscure the view of the isolated point proposed as the end of my inquiries. Morals apart from physics, art disunited from logic, the science of numbers and of space detached from the exercise of the imaginative power, even theology itself divorced from the devout aspirations to which she tends, had each in turn engaged my earnest pursuit. But to ascend those heights from which they could be contemplated as parts of one harmonious whole — to seize and to blend together the analogies pervading the works of poets and mathematicians, of naturalists and divines — this was an attempt which had convinced me how indissoluble were the fetters which riveted my soul to her sluggish associate. Set free from this bondage, and supplied with an instrument of sensation which kept pace with her own inherent activity, she found and desired no repose. Solar time is measured by the revolutions of the planetary orbs, and from the commencement to the completion of his career through the firmament, Uranus would often find me still engaged in some unbroken contemplation. During that interval I had completed some vast synthesis, in which were at once combined and distinguished all the various aspects under which some province of knowledge had disclosed itself to my view. In the nether world, high discourse had been

held on the connection of the sciences; but now I discovered the mutual influence, the interaction, and the simultaneous workings of their different laws. I no longer cultivated the exact sciences as a separate domain, but the most severe physical truth was revealed to me in union with the richest hues of ideal beauty, with the perfection of the imitative arts, with the pure abstractions of metaphysical thought, with narratives both historical and romantic, with the precepts of universal morals, and the mysteries of the Divine government. Ontology — vain-glorious word as used among men — the knowledge of universal being as distinct from species, and of species as harmonised in universal being, was the study which engaged the time and rewarded the labours of immortal minds animating spiritual bodies.

Let not those who boast themselves in logic, Aristotelian or Baconian, assume that their puny architecture of syllogistic or inductive reasoning affords the rules by which the soul, rescued from the hinderances of a carnal corporeity, erects for herself edifices of knowledge, immovable in their base, beautiful in their proportions, and towering in splendid domes and pinnacles to the skies. To Newton and to Pascal the theories of the vulgar geometry were as instinctively obvious as the preliminary axioms on which they rest. While yet an infant, Mozart was possessed of all those complex harmonies which a life of patient study scarcely reveals to inferior masters of his art. In my planetary existence, I had rejoiced in my habitual aptitude for physiology and historical researches, nor had I regretted the years of ceaseless toil devoted to them. But now I discovered that in myself, as in the great men I have mentioned, the apprehensiveness of truth had depended far more on the animal than the

mental framework. Quick and vigorous in high bodily health, but sluggish and inert under the pressure of corporeal debility, I learned that logic, experiment, and calculation had been but so many crutches to assist the movements of the halt and feeble; and that, with a physical instrumentality which study could not exhaust nor disease assail, intuition took the place of reasoning. I became rather the conscious witness, than the agent, of the process by which consequences were evolved from the premises brought under my notice.

In the society of which I had become a member, as in mundane communities, discourse was amongst the chief springs both of improvement and delight. So curiously fashioned was the integument within which my mind was now enveloped, that, after the manner of an eyelid, it could either exclude the access of any external excitement, creating within me an absolute and impregnable solitude, or lay open to the immediate survey of an associate any thought or combination of thoughts which I desired to impart to him. I had acquired two distinct languages, one of visible signs, the other of audible symbols. The first was analogous to the mute dialogue which is carried on in pantomime, by gesture and the varying expressions of the countenance; though, unlike such discourse, it was exempt from all conjectural and ambiguous meanings. As in a camera-obscura, my corporeal organs reflected the workings of the informing spirit; so that, like the ancient Peruvians, I could converse as by a series of pictures, produced and shifted with instantaneous rapidity. This mode of communication served my turn when I had any occurrences to relate, or any question to discuss, of which sensuous objects formed the basis. But when phenomena purely

psychological, destitute of all types in the material creation, were to be conveyed to a companion, I had audible symbols by which every intellectual conception, and each fluctuating state of moral sentiment, might be expressed as distinctly as geometrical diagrams express the corresponding ideas to which they are allied. By the intermixture of pictorial and symbolical speech, I could thus render myself intelligible throughout the whole range and compass of my mental operations, and could give utterance to all those subtle refinements of thought or of sensation, which, even amongst those who spoke the vernacular tongue of Plato, must, from the want of fit and determinate indications, have either died away in silence, or have been exhaled in some mystic and unintelligible jargon. Whatever distinctness of expression the pencil or vibratory chords enabled Raphael or Handel to give to their sublime but otherwise ineffectual conceptions, I had thus the power to impart to each modification of thought, and to every shade of feeling. Verbal controversies, sophistry, and all the other 'idols of the cavern,' had disappeared. Philosophy and her legitimate issue, wisdom, piety, and love, were cultivated and treasured up by each member of the great solar family, not as a private hoard to minister only to his own uses, but as a fund universally communicable, and still augmenting by constant interchange.

It is difficult or impossible to speak intelligibly, in the language of men, of the delights or of the duties of the state of being into which I had thus entered. Borne along in the vehicle of my spiritual body, I dreaded no fatigue, and was deterred by no danger in the discharge of the most arduous enterprises. Aspects of the creation, hidden from me while garmented in

the gross elements of flesh and blood, now burst on my perception as light visits him who, in mature life, for the first time acquires the visual faculty. Through each new avenue of sense thus successively opened to me, my soul, with raptures, such as seraphs feel, drew in from the still-expanding circumference wonder and delight, and an ever-increasing consciousness of the depths of her own being and resources. Contemplating the hidden forms and the occult mechanism of the material universe, I left behind me the problems with which physical science is conversant, and advanced to that higher philosophy which investigates the properties of spiritual agents; and to a theology, compared with which that which I had hitherto acquired was as insignificant as the inarticulate babblings of the cradle. My retrospective consciousness — for memory it can scarcely be called — spread out before me scenes, the bright, harmonious, and placid lights of which were mellowed, though unobscured, by distance. Misgivings as to the stability of my own opinions had fled away, as the truths with which I was engaged presented themselves to me simultaneously in their relative bearings and mutual dependence. Love, pure and catholic, warmed and expanded my heart, as thoughts wise, equitable, and benign flowed from other minds into my own in a continuous stream; the pellucid waters of which, in the inherent transparency of our regenerate nature, no deceit could darken and no guile pollute. My corporeal fabric, now become the passive instrument of my will, importuned me with no unwelcome intrusions; but buoyant, flexible, and instinct with life and vigour, obeyed every volition, and obstructed the accomplishment of none.

Yet had I not passed into that torpid elysium of

which some have dreamed, and over the descriptions of which many more have slumbered. Virtue, and her stern associate Self-control, exact obedience not from the denizens of earth alone, but from the rational inhabitants of every province of the universal empire. With each accession of knowledge and of mental power, my view became continually wider and more extended of that gulf, which, stretching out in measureless infinitude, separates the Source of Being from the most exalted of His intelligent offspring. My affiance in the divine wisdom and rectitude, reposing on foundations deep and firm in proportion to my larger acquaintance with the ways of Providence, was still necessary to sustain my trembling spirit as I meditated on the mysteries of the Divine government. For, within the reach of my observation, were discernible agonising intensities of suffering, abysses of pollution and of guilt, attesting the awful powers both of endurance and of activity of minds ejected from the defences, and despoiled of the narcotics, once afforded them by their animal structure. Awakened to a sense of their inherent though long-slumbering energies, they were captives. Exposed to every painful excitement by which the sentient faculty can be stimulated, they were naked. Reading on the face of nature inscriptions till now illegible, they saw in them their own condemnation. Remembering each incident of their former existence, they found in each fresh aliment for despair. Disabused of the illusions of sophistry and self-love, truth shed on them the appalling glare of inevitable light. Interchanging thoughts without the possibility of disguise, every foul and malignant desire diffused amongst them a deadly contagion. Destitute of any separate wants or interests, their bodies could no

longer minister to them the poor relief of an alternation of distress. The reluctant and occasional spectator of such woes, I found in faith, and hope, and meek adoration, the solace which my labouring spirit required — a task commensurate with my now-elevated powers, though the firmest and the holiest of mortals, while yet detained in his tenement of the flesh, would have been crushed and maddened beneath the burden of that fearful sight.

In the schools of the world, I had wandered in the endless mazes of fate and free-will, and the origin of evil. An inhabitant of the great celestial luminary, I became aware of relations till then unheard of and inconceivable, between the Emanative Essence and the hosts of subordinate spirits, and of questions thence resulting, of such strange and mighty import, that, prostrating myself before the wisdom and benevolence of the Most High, I was still compelled, in reverential awe, to acknowledge how inscrutable, even to my expanded capacity, was the thick darkness which shrouds His secret pavilion.

Nor were there wanting tasks, which summoned to the utmost height of daring the most courageous of the inhabitants of the sphere to which I had been translated. Glorious recompense was to be won by deeds such as immortal beings only could undertake or meditate. Ministers of the Supreme, we braved at His bidding the privation of all other joys in the delight of prompt obedience to His will. We waged with His enemies fierce conflicts, and exposed ourselves to ills, intense during their continuance, in proportion to the exquisite sensibilities of our purified corporeity. Impelled by irresistible compassion, by the cravings of insatiable benevolence, or by the vehement desire to obtain or to impart tidings affect-

ing the happiness of our own or of other orders of thinking beings, our active powers, with all our resources of constancy, magnanimity, and prudence, were called into habitual exercise; nor were there wanting dignities to be attained, or sceptres to be won, as the meet reward of illustrious achievements.

A soft and protracted flow of vocal harmony, sustained by the firmer cadence of vibrating chords, now broke in on my contemplations. It could (I at first thought) be nothing else than a choir of seraphs hymning the glorious exploits of the immortals among whom I sojourned. Yet the notes seemed familiar as household names, and the deepest springs of affection began to rise within me as I listened to those young and well-remembered voices. Then were heard the joyous laugh, the logs crackling on the warm hearth, and the hissing urn; while the gentle pressure on my shoulder of a hand embellished with the still bright nuptial ring, recalled me from the Empyræan on high to my home on earth, from the Paradise above to the Eden which I had been graciously permitted to cultivate and adorn below. I cannot truly say that I regretted the descent; yet when the vespers of my household had been sung, and the Divine presence invoked, and the parental benedictions uttered, and my happy choristers dismissed to their light slumbers, I called once more for my trusty pen, and drew up a sketch of 'The Physical Theory of a Future State,' which, when matured by more patient labour, became one of the most popular of the works which I have given to the world without my name, though not without the hope to win an enduring reputation among men.

When the author of the 'Natural History of Enthusiasm' threw away the scabbard in his war with the periodical tribe, he must have been prepared for vindictive reprisals. But it is improbable that he ever anticipated them in a form so audacious as this. To invent and publish an autobiography for him! to infer his personal history from his historical and other inquiries! to spell out even his dreams from his physiological speculations! all this is (he may perhaps say) to be exceedingly impertinent. Yet we have studied his writings to little purpose if such shall be his real sentence. Supposing him to condescend so far as to read such pages as these at all, he will (we doubt not) recognise in them rather the feelings of attachment and reverence with which a grateful pupil looks up to his teacher, than the offensive familiarity which would level the distinctions of intellectual rank. The station he holds (or deserves to hold) in the commonwealth of letters, would make such rudeness recoil with destructive force on the presumptuous author of it.

His title to that station rests chiefly in the breadth and comprehensiveness of his views of the history, the prospects, and the character of our race. His survey of human affairs is conducted from an elevation far above the mists of religious or political partisanship. His most inquisitive readers could never have discovered that he was a nonconformist, had he not announced himself in that character. Unaided by that avowal, he must have been considered only as a cosmopolitan student and teacher of Christian ethics and polity; as the grave censor of all ecclesiastical sects, the admirer of none, the eulogist of none, the member of none; as contemplating the universal Church and each of her children (disunited and

discordant as they are) with a fervent though foreboding affection, and yet as pledged to a passionate and relentless hostility against that sect (ever shifting its name but never changing its character), which, under the semblance of superhuman virtues, and the pretext of divine authority, still aims at the establishment of a spiritual despotism over the people, and the kingdom, of the Redeemer.

The 'Natural History of Enthusiasm' and the kindred works which followed it, constitute in effect a series of lectures on the latent principles which govern the course of ecclesiastical affairs, and which solve the enigmas, reconcile the contradictions, and harmonise the jarring elements by which they are perplexed. Striding from one height of generalisation to another, the teacher leaves far below him the lower world in which antiquarians, story-tellers, biographers, and dramatists are seeking the materials of their several crafts. He narrates no incidents, sketches no characters, and delineates no aspect either of social or of solitary life. His readers are supposed to be as familiar with the mere facts of history as himself (a very hazardous supposition), and must bring to the perusal of these books either much knowledge, or unbounded faith.

But though thus dwelling on the mountain tops of abstraction, he never attempts to scale beyond the limits within which the inspired volume has circumscribed all human inquiries. His assent to Christianity is no faint admission that the balance of conflicting arguments inclines in favour of that belief. It is a conviction rooted in the inmost recesses of his soul, the germinating principle of all the thoughts which have taken the deepest root, and which most luxuriantly flourish, there. Though it is at once the

labour and the solace of his life to scale the eminences and to measure the depths of truth; yet truth and the Christian revelation are synonymes in his vocabulary. With an ear trained to listen to the under tones of the Divine voice, and a heart exercised in interpreting the inarticulate language of the Divine government, he has studied the written word as they only can study it, to whom it is the distinct echo or the vivid reflection of those interior senses.

While thus grappling with principles of the widest span, our lecturer never indulges himself in so much as a momentary repose in the lap of mysticism. He steadily refuses the too ready aid of that familiar narcotic. His outline is drawn with a hand as free and bold as that of Guizot, his speculations are scarcely less recondite than those of Coleridge, but his athletic good sense disdains to enlarge itself by looming through a fog. Master as he is of the chiaro-scuro, the love of truth is ever too strong in him for the love of art. He has risen above the fashions of his age so far as to shun the region in which sublimity and nonsense hold divided rule; remembering, perhaps, that it has never been frequented by any of the master spirits of the world, and that, among men divinely inspired, he who was at once the greatest and the most profoundly learned, had thought it better to speak five words to edification, than to speak ten thousand words in an unknown tongue.

And yet these works have never been rewarded by the full tide of applause or of popularity to which they have so many titles. The tribute rendered to their writer has been very inadequate to his claims on the public gratitude. It is not difficult to assign the reason.

Wisdom is lovely still, in every form and under every disguise; whether inspiring the merriment of Momus, — or prattling in homely fables,—or carving on the mind of man, as on a tablet, apothegmatic inscriptions for the use of all ages, — or employing as her instrument the passions of the orator, the visions of the poet, or the abstractions of the philosopher. But even wisdom ceases to captivate, because she ceases to be recognised, when she sustains at the same moment different and inharmonious offices, or characters at variance with each other. Pasquin impassioned, Æsop rhetorical, Franklin visionary, Demosthenes clad in Jacques' suit of motley, are so many masqueraders, from whom the studious expect no instruction, and the idle no amusement. Congruity of style is not less indispensable than unity of design, to the success of any work of art.

To the neglect and want of that congruity, the historian of 'Enthusiasm,' of 'Spiritual Despotism,' and of 'Fanaticism,' must ascribe the disproportion between the power which animates his writings, and the effect which they produce. That which should be narrative is absorbed, and, as it were, dried up into aphorisms, and that which should be aphorism is dissolved and expanded in a flood of rhetoric. His books contain neither occurrences for the entertainment of the inquisitive, nor a body of carefully digested and well-measured doctrines for the meditation of the thoughtful. The teaching and the eloquence jar with, and spoil one another.

The eloquence, moreover, is none of the best. Be his theme what it may, the march of the historian or lecturer is still the same; stately, studied, and wearisome, period rolls after period in measured cadence, page answers page in scientific harmony. This para-

graph challenges applause for its melodious swell, that for its skilful complexity, the next for the protracted simile with which it brings some profound inquiry to a picturesque and graceful close. But the free movement and the welcome repose, and the brave neglect of embellishments, which are the usual badges of power, are wanting; and their absence suggests the very erroneous belief that the power on which they usually wait is wanting also.

This superfine style is a besetting sin of modern nonconformist literature. It has infected the sermons of Hall, their greatest preacher, the essays of Forster, their greatest thinker, and the commentary of Adam Clarke, their greatest biblicist. It may be traced in other living authors among them not less distinctly than in this their Prælector on Church History. It springs out of the jealousy and the self-assertion incident to the place they occupy in the social and the learned world. It says, or seems to say, though Oxford rejects us, and Cambridge knows us not, and Lambeth looks down on us, and May Fair eschews our company, yet you shall see that we can be as refined and as elevated in sentiment, and as abstruse in speculation as the best of them; that we can write as gorgeously as your public orators, and as learnedly as if we wore scarlet hoods in St. Mary's. In very deed, good friends, you can do all this, and many more and better things than these; and you would do them too, if you could but settle it in your minds that from the scorn which galls, and the indignities which ruffle you, you have an appeal both to Cis- and Trans-atlantic England, and that your appeal will be most effectually made, when made with the least seeming consciousness of the wrongs under which you labour.

Style in literature is like manner in society — the superficial index which all can read of internal qualities which few can decipher. If the author of these lectures and essays had either written with ease and simplicity, or had disguised his meaning under spasmodic contortions, or had talked over these grave matters in the tone of a blunt humourist, or had flattened them down to the level of a monotonous orthodoxy; if, in a word, he had either risen to the graces of nature, or condescended to those of affectation, his admirers would have been more numerous and more enthusiastic. Language in his hands is an instrument of wonderful volume, flexibility, and compass; but it is made to produce harmonies of such subtle elaboration, that the ear aches for the even flow of a few plain words quietly taking their proper places. Felicitous expression is an excellent thing in its season; but serve up a whole octavo full of exquisite sentences, and neither the guest nor the cook himself can clearly tell what the repast is made of. In the didactic works of the Historian of Enthusiasm, as in those of Dr. Channing, penury and affluence of thought are made to look so like each other, that they must be undressed in order to be distinguished; and while he is making out which is which, the courteous reader is apt to lose his courtesy. In proportion as he is the more profound thinker of the two, the Englishman is the more to be upbraided for the perverse ingenuity which thus mars his own success. Objects so elevated as his ought not to have been exposed to such hazard.

It is, however, chiefly, though not exclusively, when he fills the Professor's chair, that he is to be numbered among the promoters 'corruptæ eloquentiæ.' As an assailant of the heresiarchs of his age, he was quite another man, and his war-cry rang sharp and clear.

His philosophic and his belligerent notes differed as the contortions of the muscles differ from calisthenics; or as Samson struggling with the cords which bound him, differed from Samson falling with unfettered limbs on the hapless Philistines. Throwing aside his gown, with all its elaborate and graceful folds, he girded up his loins for the combat, and presented himself to his applauding friends and discomfited opponents a literary athlete, in good wind and perfect training, his thoughts condensed and his words compressed within the narrow limits of time and space permitted him by the conditions of the controversy. Each successive number became more nervous, pungent, and idiomatic, and he quitted the field not without the praise (the last probably to which he ever aspired) of considerable proficiency even in the arts of sarcasm and banter.

In his speculations on the state and employments of the human soul when clad with her post-sepulchral or spiritual body, he resumed the abstract style of his prælections polished up to a height of painful brilliancy, though their turgid and declamatory tone was exchanged for a manner more in unison with themes so grave and so exalted. Voyages of discovery in Utopia, when conducted by skilful explorators, are, however, so rich in the returns they make to this world of realities, that it would be mere captiousness to complain of the phraseology of the journal or the log-book.

Since death entered into our world, every tribe of men, almost every individual of our species, has been labouring to penetrate the dark abyss into which it conducts one generation after another. Scipio dreamt of colloquies with the wise and the good of all ages. Mahomet taught the students of the Koran to dream

(if Sale's translation may be trusted) of 'rivers of incorruptible water and rivers of milk, the taste whereof changeth not; gardens planted with shady trees, in each of which shall be two flowing fountains; couches, the linings whereof shall be of thick silk, interwoven with gold; and beauteous damsels refraining their eyes from beholding any but their spouses, having complexions like rubies and pearls, and fine black eyes.' The Esquimaux also has his heaven, where seal skins may be procured in placid seas, and undying lamps are fed with inexhaustible supplies of the odorous grease of bears.

The stream can rise no higher than the fountain. Our ideas of immortal good are but amplifications of our mortal enjoyments. To associate together all innocent and not incompatible delights known to us by actual experience, subtracting from them every alloy of pain, satiety, and languor, and thus to sublimate and define our conceptions of felicity, is to be the creator of the only heaven, by the contemplation of which hope can be sustained and activity invigorated. He who most diligently and cheerfully surveys the 'happy gardens' to which a benign Providence may have conducted him in this world, is the best qualified to depict the Elysium which reason or imagination has laid out and planted for the abode of the blessed beyond the grave.

The author of 'The Physical Theory of a future Life,' judged by this test, must be esteemed a wise and a happy man. Wise, because, affecting no superhuman disdain of mere bodily gratifications, he has no fear of acknowledging to others, or to himself, the dependence of his spiritual on his animal economy; and happy, because he must distinctly have experienced that unresisting servitude of the body to the soul, which he has so vividly described as the great

element of her serenity and freedom. Such as is his solar Paradise, such must also have been his earthly Eden; the first, his future blessedness in the highest conceivable measure, the last, his present happiness in the highest attainable degree. Such a midsummer night's dream could have visited the slumbers of no one whose fancy was tainted with sensual defilement or whose intellect was untrained to active exercise and close self-inspection. Or, if the theorist be really entitled to no higher praise than that of having skilfully selected the most alluring possibilities of future good from the many celestial schemes with which the poetry and the fiction of all ages abound, yet even so it must be conceded that the choice has been guided by opinions such as every one must wish to adopt, and by tastes which, in our better moments, we should all desire to gratify.

If our theorist had constructed his heaven from the materials gathered in his survey, not of his domestic, but of the outer world, there would, we apprehend, have been but few aspirants for a translation to it. For, both the world of active and the world of contemplative life, as they exist beyond the precincts of his own retirement, present themselves to him in dark and uninviting aspects. He mourns over the low estate of theology among us, and laments the degradation of all those higher intellectual pursuits with which theology maintains an indissoluble connection. Acquainted, perhaps but too well, with the religious parties of our State, their infirmities and their faults, he pours out eloquent longings for the advent of a more catholic spirit, of a piety more intense and less ostentatious, and of a sacred literature animated by some nobler impulse than the hire of booksellers and the praise of ephemeral critics. His

own labours for the happiness of mankind, do not seem to be well sustained by the cheering influence of hope. His philanthropy is ever tinged with sadness. He loves children, because they are exempt from the prevailing degeneracy;—and the face of nature, because it is the one unsullied reflection of the benignity of the Creator;—and the books of other times, because they are the records of human wisdom, whose living voice is no longer to be heard;—and the Universal Church, because it is the ark floating on the troubled waters of this evil time, freighted with the best treasures, and charged with the destinies of our race. Man also he loves, but with feelings pensive if not melancholy, and fastidious even when most benignant. In his many books there is no tinge of spleen; but they exhibit that disgust for the follies and the vices of the world, which at once demands and discourages exertion.

Casting off these depressing influences, he has, however, devoted all the resources of a comprehensive understanding, and all the affections of a benevolent heart, to correct the general debasement, and to exhibit a model of those higher pursuits to which he would reclaim his generation. Enthusiasts, fanatics, spiritual despots, sciolists in education, the pastors who slumber within the fold, and the robbers from without who spoil it, form a confederacy, the assailant of which should be encouraged by the gratitude of all good men. If the soul of William Cowper yet breathes among us, it is through the lips of the historian of Enthusiasm. Not, indeed, that the poet has found a successor in the magic art of establishing a personal and affectionate intimacy between himself and his readers. There is no new fire-side like that of Olney round which we can gather; nor any walks like those of Weston Underwood, of which we are the com-

panions; nor a heart at once broken and playful, whose sorrows and amusements are our own; nor are we surrounded by a family group, with tame hares, spaniels, bird-cages, and knitting-needles, as familiar to us as those of our own boyhood, and almost as dear, — each in turn reflecting the gentle, thoughtful, elevated mind of him to whom they belonged, in all its vicissitudes of despondency and hope, of grave wisdom and of a mirth as light and pure as that of infancy. This is the high prerogative of genius, addressing mankind at large through the vernacular idiom of one land in the universal language of all. But Stanford Rivers has given birth to a succession of efforts to exalt the national character, which might vie with those of Olney and of Weston in piety and earnestness, in genuine freedom of thought, in the relish for all the domestic pleasures, and innocent delights of life, in the filial love of God, and the brotherly love of man.

Learning and logical acumen, and a wide acquaintance with the history and the heart of man, which the poet neither possessed nor needed, impart to the works of the essayist a charm, without which it is vain, in these days, to interfere in the debates which agitate society. There is a charm, too, even in his distaste for the pursuits most in request amongst us; for it springs from the grandeur of the ideal excellence by which his imagination is possessed. He remembers that Omniscience, though veiling its intimations in the coarse mantle of human language, will occasionally emit some gleams of that radiance which illumines the regions of the blessed; and these he would reverently gather and concentrate. He is conscious that there is in Christianity an expansive power, sometimes repressed but never destroyed; and that latent energy

he strives to draw forth into life and action. He perceives that the mysteries which shroud the condition and the prospects of our race, however inscrutable to the slaves of appetite, are not absolutely impervious to a soul purified by devout contemplation; and to these empyreal heights he aspires at once to point and to lead the way. He knows that to him whose foot is firmly planted on the eternal verities of Heaven, there belong motives of such force, and a courage so undaunted, as should burst through all resistance; and he calls on those who enjoy this high privilege to assert their native supremacy above the sordid ambition, the frivolities, and the virulence of the lower world. The voice thus raised in expostulation will die away, not indeed unheeded by the interior circle he addresses, nor unblessed by a meet recompence; but unrewarded, we fear, by the accomplishment of these exalted purposes. Eloquent as is the indignation with which our anonymous monitor regards the low level to which divine and human literature has fallen amongst us, and mean as is his estimate of the pursuits in which the men of his own days are engaged, a hope may perhaps, without presumption, be indulged, that less fastidious and not less capable judges will pronounce a more lenient sentence on us and on our doings.

In the great cycle of human affairs there are many stages, each essential to the consummation of the designs of Providence, and each separated by broad distinctions from the rest. They whose province it is to censure, and they whose desire it is to improve their age, will never find their sacred fires extinct from the mere want of fuel. History and theory are always at hand with humiliating contrasts to the times we live in. That men have been better or might be better than they are, has been true since the first

fathers of our race returned to their native dust, and will still be true as long as our planet shall be inhabited by their descendants. But below the agitated surface of the ocean, under-currents are silently urging forward, on their destined path, the waters of the mighty deep, themselves impelled by that Power which none may question or resist. Human society obeys a similar influence. Laws as anomalous in appearance, as uniform in reality, as those which direct the planetary movements, determine the present state, and regulate the progress of commonwealths, whether political, literary, or religious. Christianity demands the belief, and experience justifies the hope, that their ultimate tendency is towards the universal dominion of piety and virtue. But it is neither pious nor rational to suppose, that this consummation can be attained by any sequence of identical causes constantly working out similar effects.

The best generations, like the best men, are those which possess an individual and distinctive character. A chain of splendid biographies constitutes the history of past centuries. Whoever shall weave the chronicles of our own, must take for his staple, not biography but statistics, illuminated by a skilful generalisation. Once every eye was directed to the leaders of the world; now all are turned to the masses of which it is composed. Instead of Newtons presiding over Royal Societies, we have Dr. Birkbecks lecturing at Mechanics' Institutes. If no Wolseys arise to found colleges like that of Christchurch, Joseph Lancaster and William Bell have emulated each other in works not less momentous at the Borough Road and Baldwin's Gardens. We people continents, though we have ceased to discover them. We abridge folios for the many, though we no longer write them for the

few. Our fathers compiled systems of divinity — we compose pocket theological libraries. They invented sciences, we apply them. Literature was once an oligarchy, it is now a republic. Our very monitors are themselves infected by the degeneracy they deplore. For the majestic cadence of Milton, and the voluptuous flow of Jeremy Taylor's periods, they substitute the rhetorical philosophy, invented some fifty years since, to countervail the philosophical rhetoric of the French Revolution; and put forth, in a collection of essays for the drawing-room, reproofs which the hands of Prynne would have moulded into learned, fierce, and ponderous folios.

It is impossible to prevent — is it wise to bewail — this change in our social and intellectual habits? During the inundations of the Nile, the worship of the mysterious river ceased, and no hymns were heard to celebrate its glories. Idolatry had lost its stay, and imagination her excitement; but the land was fertilised. Learning, once banked up in universities and cathedrals, is now diffused through shops and factories. The stream, then so profound and limpid, may now, perhaps, be both shallow and muddy. But is it better that the thirst of a whole nation should be thus slaked, or that the immortals should be quaffing their nectar apart in sublime abstraction from the multitude? There is no immediate and practicable reconcilement of these advantages. Genius, and wit, and science, and whatever else raises man above his fellows, must bend to the universal motives of human conduct. When honour, wealth, public gratitude, and the sense of good desert, reward those who teach elementary truth to the people at large, the wisest and the best will devote to that office powers, which, in a different age, would have been

consecrated to more splendid, though not perhaps to more worthy undertakings.

In the state of letters, there is no maintaining a polity in which the three elements of power are blended together in harmonious counterpoise. There a monarch infallibly becomes a despot, and a democracy subjugates to itself whatever else is eminent or illustrious. Divines, poets, and philosophers, addressing millions of readers and myriads of critics, are immediately rewarded by an applause, or punished by a neglect, to which it is not given to mortal man to be superior or indifferent. Inform the national mind, and improve the general taste up to a certain point, and to that point you inevitably depress the efforts of those who are born to instruct the rest. Had Spenser flourished in the nineteenth century, would he have aspired to produce the Faery Queen? Had Walter Scott lived in the sixteenth, would he have condescended to write the Lady of the Lake? Our great men are less great because our ordinary men are less abject. These lamentations over the results of this compromise are rather pathetic than just. It forms one indispensable chapter in the natural history of a people's intellectual progress. It is one of the stages through which the national mind must pass towards the general elevation of literature, sacred and profane. We know not how to regret that genius has for the moment abdicated her austere supremacy, and stooped to be popular and plain. Mackintosh suspended his philosophy for the compilation of a familiar History of England. Faithless to his Peris and Glendoveers, Mr. Moore turned chronicler to teach to the reading commonalty of the realm the sad tale of the woes inflicted on the land of his birth. No longer emulous of Porson, the Bishop of London devotes his learned leisure to preparing

cheap and easy lessons for the householders of his diocese. Lord Brougham arrests the current of his eloquence, to instruct mechanics in the principles of the sciences which they are reducing to daily practice. Tracts for the times are extorted from the depositories of ecclesiastical tradition, obedient to the general impulse which they condemn, and constrained to render the Church argumentative, that they may render her oracular. Nay, the author of the 'Natural History of Enthusiasm' himself, despite his own protests, yielding at length to the current, has become the periodical writer of monthly tracts, where, in good round controversial terms, the superficial multitude are called to sit in judgment on the claims of the early fathers to sound doctrine, good morals, and common sense. Let who will repine at what has passed, and at what is passing, if they will allow us to rejoice in what is to come. If we witness the growth of no immortal reputations, we see the expansion of universal intelligence. The disparities of human understanding are much the same in all times; but when the general level shall be the highest, then will the mighty of the earth rise to the most commanding eminences.

But whatever may be the justice of the hopes we thus indulge for future generations, our business is with ourselves. If, as we think, they are well judging who devote the best gifts of nature and of learning to the instruction of the illiterate, the praise of wisdom is not to be denied to such as write with the more ambitious aim of stimulating the nobler intellects amongst us to enterprises commensurate with their elevated powers. No strenuous effort for the good of mankind was ever yet made altogether in vain; nor will those of our author be fruitless, though the results may fall far short of his aspirations. The

general currents of thought and action can never be diverted from their channels, except by minds as rarely produced as they are wonderfully endowed. Energy, decision, and a self-reliance independent on human praise or censure, are amongst the invariable characteristics of such master intellects. To this sublime order of men the Recluse of Stanford Rivers does not belong. Nor can a place be assigned to him among those calmer spirits, whose inventive genius, or popular eloquence, has enabled them from their solitudes to cast on the agitated mass of society seeds of thought destined at some future period to change the aspect of human affairs. He is an independent more than an original thinker. He is rather exempt from fear than animated by ardent courage in announcing the fruits of his inquiries. A great master of language, he is himself but too often mastered by it. He is too much the creature, to become the reformer, of his age. His assiduity to please is fatal to his desire to command. His efforts to move the will are defeated by his success in dazzling the fancy. Yet his books exhibit a character, both moral and intellectual, from the study of which the reader can hardly fail to rise a wiser and a better man. Standing aloof from all vulgar excitements, heedless of the transient politics and the fugitive literature of his times, and intent only on the permanent interests of mankind, he has laboured to promote them with an honest love of truth, aided by brilliant talents, comprehensive knowledge, and undaunted intrepidity. And thus he has come under the guidance of principles, which no man can cultivate in his own bosom, or earnestly impart to other minds, without earning a reward which will render human applause insignificant, or reduce the neglect of the world to a matter of comparative indifference.

THE EPILOGUE.

On the original appearance, in the Edinburgh Review, of the Essays contained in these volumes, they were condemned, by some, as casting only a furtive and timid glance at those sacred topics which must lie at the foundation of all ecclesiastical biography. To the author himself, however, it had appeared impossible to assign to such topics their due prominence in a journal devoted to science, to literature, and to politics. But, on republishing these papers in his own person, and with his name, he contracts and acknowledges the obligation to supply, as far as may be in his power, the omissions which formerly appeared to him inevitable. He is even solicitous to avow, without reserve, the opinions which have been rather suggested or assumed, than explicitly stated, in the preceding pages. Having celebrated, with almost equal zeal, the characters of many who maintained creeds and worshipped under forms, widely contrasted with each other, he is desirous to disclaim that state of mind to which all religious distinctions are insignificant, and to explain why the reverence of all the members of the great Christian family, is, in his judgment, due alike to many who have belonged to each of the great sections of which it is composed. Great as must be his liability to error on such a subject, he rejoices to know that such errors can

hardly be injurious to any one. No authority will be attached by any other inquirer to the mere 'Guesses after Truth' of a man, who (unlike the profound and large-minded scholars who have appropriated that title to some of their maturest thoughts) is destitute of the advantage of a theological education, and has throughout his life been deeply involved, with scarcely any interval, in secular affairs. Yet, to assist as far as possible in the detection of any fallacies by which he may have been misled, he will attempt to render an account of the reasons by which he has been guided; taking his departure from principles which he supposes to be elementary.

From our Redeemer himself we have learnt what are the two commandments on which hang all the law and the prophets. From the disciple who lay in his bosom, and whom he selected as the channel of his higher revelations, we have learnt what are the two truths on which hang all the other doctrines of the Gospel. The first is, that God is light, — the second is, that God is love.

God is light. He is light, inherent, pure, and inexhaustible. He is also light diffusive, or 'the father of lights.' From him, as from an ever-salient fountain, light flows out to his whole animate creation. But to each different order of living beings it flows in infinitely varied degrees of intensity and clearness. It comes to each through various mediums by which it is refracted. It is discoloured in each by the corruptions of the recipients, or obscured by their infirmities. Light, though from Heaven itself, when transmitted through the exhalations of earth, may mislead even those whom it illuminates.

From God we derive the light of our Animal Instincts — that is, our natural appetencies, and our

natural aversions towards material things. But the sorrows of a world, groaning beneath the curse of intemperance, proclaim that they who were formed in the image and likeness of their Creator, can never be guided into the ways of wisdom or into the paths of peace by appetite alone.

From God we derive the light of our Sensitive Instincts — that is, those sympathies and antipathies which are the bonds of attachment or the sources of disunion amongst mankind. But to trust to our passions alone to conduct us to the repose of the soul — the haven of our rest and our true happiness — would be as reasonable as to navigate the ocean without rudder, chart, or compass, at the bidding of each shifting breeze and devious current.

From God we derive the light of our Intellectual Instincts — that is, those intuitions or convictions of the mind which are common to the whole race of man, which form the latent basis of all our argumentations, and to which we inevitably, though often unconsciously refer as the test by which to ascertain the soundness of all our inferences. Such, for example, is the indestructible belief in our own individuality — in the reality of the relation of cause and effect — in the real existence of the objects revealed to us by our senses — in the recurrence of the same sequences when all the antecedents are the same — with many other of those first principles which are implied in all our words, and assumed in all our thoughts. Yet how insufficient these first axioms are to lead us to true wisdom, is attested by the incurable discords of the wisest. There are depths of ignorance, and abysses of self-inflicted misery, into which the possession of these great elements of knowledge has never prevented, and never can prevent, the great body of mankind from plunging.

From God we derive the light of our Judicial Instincts —that is, of conscience, the interior tribunal by which we are either approved or condemned, in the use we make of that measure of free will and of free agency which is entrusted to us. This is the restraint which the Author of that awful power has imposed on the improper, the capricious, or the arbitrary use of it. But the accuracy of all judicial sentences depends on the knowledge, the capacity, the patience, and the impartiality of the judge. Who will venture to claim for the judge within his own bosom, the possession of those qualifications in a perfect, or even in an eminent degree ? In what tongue or language has not the blindness of self love passed into a proverb ? Who is the man whose mental vision is not obstructed by some beam, as often as it is directed to the survey of his own heart, or of his own conduct ?

From God we derive the light of our Moral Instincts —that is, of those pains and pleasures which wait on the judgments of the conscience, and form the sanctions of the law written on the heart. This sensibility renders us the executioners on ourselves of the sentences authorised by that law, and promulgated by that judge. If those sentences were invariably right, and if they as invariably awakened in us the corresponding sentiment, whether pleasurable or painful, in its proper measure and due intensity, the constitution of our nature would be perfect, and sin and sorrow would take their flight from our world. But the light of moral sentiment fails us, because our self-adjudications are so often erroneous, and because our sensibility is subject to a continual decay. Like our other affections, it retains its vitality and power, just so far as it is permitted to regulate our conduct, and no farther. Emotions, followed by no practical results,

first become dormant and then extinct; and this is true of self-complacency and of remorse, as much as of any other of our feelings.

From God we derive the light of our Social Instincts — that is, the reflected light of the judgments of other men. By adopting their opinions, we become, as it were, spectators of the stage on which we are ourselves the actors, and applaud or condemn our own conduct with a sort of borrowed impartiality. But the same social nature which bestows this light also obscures it. For that nature induces or rather constrains us to adjust our own standard of right and wrong to the level of the maxims, the habits, and the sentiments of the society of which we are members, however low that level may happen to be.

From God we derive the light of Understanding —that is, of the faculty which observes and reflects, which collects premises, and deduces inferences; which has truth for its object and logic for its guide. They who are most largely endowed with this mental power, are accustomed to assign to it a supremacy to which it is, in their judgment, absurd to suppose that any other faculty of the mind can be superior or co-ordinate. They maintain, that he who argues against the absolute dominion of the intellect admits, in effect, the very proposition which he denies in terms; and attempts, by a process of reasoning, to show that reasoning is not a process on which reliance may be placed. Yet the idolaters of the human understanding had need be sustained by a very potent faith. Our dialectics have indeed ascertained some of the laws of the material world. But what is that problem, in the inquiries which most concern us, of which they have afforded to mankind a solution in which all unanimously acquiesce? What has the logical faculty ascertained

respecting our relations to Him who made us—or our duties to Him or to each other — or our prospects beyond the grave — or the structure of our minds — or the relation of the mind to the body — or even respecting our highest temporal interests in political, social, and domestic life ? On these topics the logicians of every age have been labouring since the creation of our race. Is there one moral truth which they have placed beyond the reach of controversy ? Is there any one falsehood in moral science on which they have inflicted an incurable death wound ? One position indeed, and only one, relating to things not material, they seem to have made unassailably secure. It is the position, that logic can discover for us guides more trustworthy than itself, and can demonstrate their authority over us. And to have conducted us to such guides is, in fact, the highest triumph which the human understanding can boast.

From God we derive the light of Human Authority —that is, the teaching of our fellow men, whether they address us by the voice of ancient tradition, or of modern opinion — whether they speak to us as parents or as preceptors, as philosophers or as divines. Yet so inconsistent are the demands made upon our assent by our various teachers, and so nearly do their claims to our confidence seem to balance each other, that the injunction to 'call no man master,' had been laid upon us by human wisdom, long before it was sanctioned by Him in whom was impersonated the fulness of the divine wisdom.

From God we derive the light of Revelation — and what tongue, of men or of angels, can converse in terms befitting so lofty a theme ? The Holy Scriptures differ from other writings in kind, rather than in degree. They, and they alone, have taught us

whatever it most concerns us to know of Him who made us, and of ourselves — of the relations in which we stand to Him, and of the duties which those relations impose upon us. They, and they only, have disclosed to us the nature, the consequences, and the remedies of sin. In them we have the portraiture, not elsewhere to be found, of the highest perfection attainable by our fallen humanity, and of that infinitely higher perfection which, though ideal in our race, was real and absolute in Him who lived and died to redeem us. The Bible is the sanctuary from out of which issue voices adapted to every exigency of human life, and to every various form of human utterance; but, amidst that boundless variety, all harmonious in the inculcation of a holiness otherwise unknown and unimagined amongst men. It is the point of convergence where meet history and biography, sacred song and weighty apothegm, parable and proverb, law and prophecy, argument and expostulation, all steeped and imbued in the colours of our mortal nature, and moulded into its forms, and yet all instinct with the divinity of their common origin. It is the joint work of princes and of peasants, of sages and of fishermen, of saints and of publicans, all speaking in the same elevated tone, and all breathing the same pure spirit, through a long succession of fifteen centuries. It every where points to one great Being as the common object and centre of all revealed truth; an incarnation of deity, towards whom prophets and evangelists alike direct their adoring gaze, who imparts unity of design to the whole composition, and in whom the incommunicable attributes of the divine nature are reconciled with the essential conditions of the nature of man.

And yet what is that doctrine, what that ecclesias-

tical polity, what that system of moral obligation, in support of which the Bible is not confidently quoted by contending multitudes? The Catholic finds in it seven sacraments. The Quaker discovers that in the system of the sacred writers, sacraments have no place or existence whatever. To the adherents of the Nicene Creed the Scriptures disclose a doctrine which reduces the thoughts of the heart to the silent adoration of a mystery incapable of adequate expression. To those who reject that creed, the same pages appear to declare that doctrine to be nothing less than a profane idolatry. To the followers of Augustine, the Bible appears to teach fatalism; to the disciples of Pelagius, an arbitrary freedom of the human will, and the consequent contingency of all the events of human life. Some find in revelation commands to baptize infants, to keep holy the first day of the week, and to revere in bishops the legitimate successors of the apostles; while others declare that it is absolutely silent on all these subjects. The necessity of a virtuous life to a happy existence after death, is, to some eyes, disclosed in the Word of God as with a sunbeam; and there are those who declare themselves unable to discover in it the announcement of any such indispensable connection. Thus, with the same end in view, and with the same guide-book in their hands, crowds are thronging different, nay, opposite paths, and all asserting, with apparently equal confidence, that the path they pursue is that which the Book prescribes.

Shall we then conclude that this celestial guide is erroneous or equivocal? God forbid! Or shall we say, that of the so many paths thus pursued by so many contending sects, there is one, and only one, which is trodden by the honest, the candid, and the

upright, and that all who deviate from that one path, are the victims of their own levity, or prejudice, or insincerity? Or may we not find some other explanation of this phenomenon, compatible at once with the reverence due to the sacred canon, and with the charity due by every man to his brother?

First, then, let it be considered that whenever the divine voice breaks the otherwise uninterrupted silence between heaven and earth, such an occurrence supposes either that man shall be prepared for the reception of that voice by some organic change in his nature, or that his Creator should address him in human language. But human language being impressed with all the infirmities, and darkened by all the mental obscurities of those who have invented, employed, and modified it, must be a most imperfect vehicle and exponent of thought. Consequently, communications reaching us, even from the Deity himself, through the channel of our own words and ideas, must partake, more or less, of the indistinctness and ambiguity inseparable from all our thoughts and all our discourse.

Nor must it be forgotten that the Scriptures are written in languages totally unknown to the vast body of those who read them, and that incomparably the most important part of the Scriptures (that is, the words of our Lord and Saviour himself) are known to the most learned only by a translation. Here, then, is another source of the diversity of our judgments about the real sense of the Word of God. For example, the whole controversy regarding transubstantiation rests on the precise meaning of a Greek word, which it is perfectly certain that Christ never uttered. We can only conjecture what his very words were, and, in the wide field of conjecture, it is morally im-

possible that a real unanimity of judgment should prevail.

There are also large opportunities for honest differences of interpretation, arising from the admitted variations between the different books of the Bible, and the different parts of the same books, in what respects the plenitude of the inspiration of each. Without entering on a subject so replete with difficulty, it may sufficiently explain the disagreements of Christians in the conclusions which they gather from the Bible, that the Bible of the greater number of them contains many books which are excluded from the Bible of the minority; and that few, if any, educated men, acknowledge the same authority in every part of what they receive as holy writ, or have come to any clear agreement as to the passages to which the highest sanction belongs.

But a far more important explanation than any of these, of the discord between interpreters, is to be found in the very structure and design both of the Old Testament and of the New. They are not, and were never meant to be, what Urim and Thummim once were. They have no positive mandates or oracular responses for the guidance of individual inquirers in specific cases. The *sortes sanctorum* were as gross a superstition as searching the entrails of victims, or watching the flight of birds. The Bible speaks not to the eye, but to the intellect — not to the ear, but to the soul. It yields its precious ores not to those who merely search the surface, but to those only who laboriously penetrate its mines. To extract the real spirit of any one passage, many passages must be studied. To become a scriptural interpreter, a man must have a scriptural mind, and be living a scriptural life. To those who approach this divine light,

in any temper less diligent, or less devout than this, it opens innumerable sources of error. The Bible abounds in examples, some of which were never designed to be models for the imitation of any one, and many of which are unfit for our own imitation. It abounds in threatenings and promises detached from their implied, though real conditions. It has many precepts thrown into the form of paradox — many parables involved in purposed obscurity — many sacred songs in which the genius of poetry expands itself in the abrupt, elliptical, and figurative language of imagination and passion — many proverbs in which epigram and antithesis are employed to embellish the bald precision of moral truth — many dramatic dialogues, in which the conflict of opinion supposes some of the interlocutors to speak erroneously — many letters of which we understand most imperfectly the occasions, the allusions, and the context — and innumerable references to customs, to laws, to modes of thought, and modes of action, many of which are utterly foreign to our own.

Is it, then, any reasonable cause of surprise, that the different students of the Bible should deduce from it so vast a variety of conflicting opinions, and of rules of conduct opposed to each other?—or that so vast an accumulation of narratives and parables, of threatenings and promises, of hymns and proverbs, of letters and prophecies, thrown out in so free a spirit, and so usually disconnected from the restrictions and qualifications contemplated by their authors, should be intelligible only to the few who carefully collate, diligently balance, and devoutly meditate them?

From God we derive that true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world—that is, the light that emanates from the person of Christ himself.

He is revealed to us, not as a mere teacher or prophet, but as in all ages a real and living presence in his Church — as one to whom we bear a spiritual consanguinity — as at once high and holy in a sense which no human language can express, and yet a very man, bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh — as so intimately known to us, that in every exigency of our own lives, imagination can place him before us as at once an example and a monitor — as satisfying that craving of our nature, which, in its abuse, conducts us to idolatry, by reducing what would otherwise be an impersonal, and almost evanescent abstraction, into a definite, palpable, and familiar form — as sympathising with all our feelings which are either good or blameless, and as pitying, even while he condemns, the feelings fatal to our own happiness — as having partaken of all our sorrows, and of some of our innocent and highest enjoyments — as at once our atoning sacrifice, and the high priest by whom that sacrifice is offered — as Himself the Way, the Truth, and the Life — as the Head in which all the members are united, the Stem from which all the branches draw their nutriment, the Shepherd by whom all the flock are gathered and protected within the same fold.

From God also, we derive that awful interior light which the dying Saviour promised, and which the ascending Saviour bestowed — that other glory of the Christian system, and inestimable privilege of the Christian Church, by means of which the definite, the palpable, and the familiar is withdrawn, to make way for a presence (undefinable, imperceptible, yet not impersonal) of holiness, of power, and of love — a presence dwelling in a silent, though real communion with the intellect and the affections of man — a pre-

sence invoked by prayer, retained by obedience, grieved by sin, and excluded by obduracy — a presence which suggests to the soul all heaven-born thoughts, and casts out all unhallowed imaginations, and awakens that dawn of day which, if unobstructed by our own perverseness, will gradually heighten to the very noontide of spiritual wisdom.

It may seem a mere contradiction to assert or to suppose that in this rich affluence of light derived from Him whom we adore as incarnate Deity, and from Him whom we revere as indwelling Deity, darkness should yet overcast the faculties we derive from Him whom we worship as creative Deity. It should, however, be considered, that it is to the pure in heart, and to them alone, that it is permitted to see God — that it is only if the eye be single that the body can be full of light — that if the light within us be darkness, there is no measure for the depth of that darkness — that as to the production of vision by the material eye, it is necessary not only that the pure rays of light should reach the retina, but that the component humours of the eye itself should be blended together in limpid purity; so light, though proceeding from Deity himself, will produce no optical result on the mental lens which is darkened by the predominance of sensuality, or worldly mindedness, or any other debasing passion.

Thus placed at the point of convergence of so many distinct beams of light, all originally springing from the same heavenly source, yet all distorted and discoloured or obstructed in their progress by the mediums through which they pass, man, even when gifted with the clearest and the strongest vision, cannot but be to a great extent perplexed and confused. His instincts, his understanding, his conscience, his moral senti-

ments, his human teachers, his written oracles, his divine guide, all address him in voices which, though capable of reconcilement, cannot always be promptly reconciled. If he refuses his attention and reverence to any one of them, it is at the imminent hazard of inducing a misapprehension of the meaning of the rest. To perceive and seize the harmony which pervades them all, is the great triumph and the high reward of wisdom. To be deaf to that harmony, is the almost universal condition of those who, without reason, claim to be wise.

Perfectly to combine into one pencil all the confluent rays of these various lights from heaven,—harmoniously to unite in one strain all these voices, which reach us simultaneously from the same divine source of knowledge, — is an attainment so sublime and arduous, as to baffle the utmost efforts of our unaided reason. Yet it is an attainment indispensable to the formation in the heart of man of that living similitude to Christ himself in which all true Christianity consists. Reverently, therefore, but with unhesitating confidence, we turn to the revealed word of God for assistance in this great exigency of our intellectual and moral nature, and in that word we read that all-embracing truth, which Christ himself lived to illustrate in action, and which it was given to his beloved disciple to concentrate in speech, — the truth, namely, that 'God is love.'

The Hebrew psalmist knew, and even the Grecian rhapsodists occasionally surmised, that 'God is loving unto every man, and that His mercy is over all His works.' That God is love, is an infinitely deeper discovery. It reveals to us that awful Being, who is so infinitely exalted above our knowledge, as admitting of some approach to definition by that senti-

ment which, of all others, is the most familiar to our consciousness. It enables us to discern, however faintly and obscurely, the moral nature of our Creator in the yet remaining traces in ourselves of His own image and likeness, in which our first progenitor was created.

The eternity of matter is usually regarded as a dogma inconsistent with Theism. In our presumption, some have dared to speak of an eternity inhabited by Deity alone, in a profound and unbroken solitude, *before* the creation of the material universe. But we ensnare ourselves in our own words in thus ascribing the properties of time to a state in which, by the hypothesis itself, time was not. It is a gratuitous and unmeaning assumption that, until some definite era, He who is love had no object and no exercise for that essential condition of his very being. The purest Theism has nothing at variance with the belief that the eternal fountain of life has been salient from all eternity — that the creation is coeval with the Creator — that to impart existence to subordinate intelligences, is one of the inherent attributes of God — and that the Almighty Source of such derivative minds, has ever been pleased to assign to them some local abode and some bodily integument.

As the objects of sense were formed not for themselves, but for the sentient minds to whose wants they minister ; so those sentient minds were called into existence not for themselves, but for Him by whose fiat they were made. And that prolific volition, what else was it, but the will of Him who is love, that His throne should be girt about by a countless host of spirits, whom He might regard with complacency and enrich by His beneficence ?

But for complacency, that is, for the love of a moral

agent, there can be no place unless that agent possesses some inherent power within the limits of which he is free. A mere machine, though the mechanism be intellectual or moral, can never be the object of approbation or of esteem to any one who is aware that it has no spontaneous movements. Compulsory action can never win for him by whom it is performed the favour or the kindly regards of any one; not even of him in whose service the agent is employed.

Man was thus created free, that he might be one of the objects of the love of his Creator. Hence it followed, as an inevitable consequence, that the Creator demanded from that free agent a return of love. To human apprehension, at least, it is an impossibility that the subject of love should not desire to be the object of love. Accordingly, the first and great commandment was, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength.' And the second was like unto it. The common Father of all mankind, regarding all his children with love, could not but desire for the sake of all, that mutual love should prevail among them. He therefore commanded each one to love his neighbour as himself.

But love which is not spontaneous, is love in name only, not in reality. It was of necessity left in the choice of man, either to render to his Maker the required tribute of affection, or to withhold it. The very purpose of his creation required that he should be free to fulfil the great commandment, or to infringe it; that he should be at liberty to do good, or to do evil — to be holy, or to be sinful. In a world created by Him who is love, in order to satisfy that immutable condition of his own being, there

must therefore of necessity have been a place for the appearance of moral evil.

But moral evil, or the withholding from the Author of our being the love which He demands, must be the parent of physical evil, that is, of pain, of suffering, or of sorrow. For that which infinite love, directed by omniscience, commands, must be the highest good of him to whom the command is addressed; and disobedience to such commands must consequently be the suicidal abandonment and rejection of happiness. To prevent that suicide, or to reclaim the self-destroyer into the ways of peace, love will resort to a discipline as stern, severe, and formidable as the inveteracy of the moral disorder may require. Such love will never degenerate into fondness, nor shrink from the infliction of any remedial punishment, however protracted or acute.

As love can clothe and conceal itself in a wholesome rigour to the disobedient, so it cannot but manifest itself in an indignant jealousy to the faithless. The first injunction of the Decalogue is, that we regard Jehovah as our only God; the last is, in effect, that we do not alienate our hearts from Him to any sublunary good. The commands which intervene between these two, are all denunciations of His rivals in our hearts; that is, of idol worship, of irreverence, of irreligion, of self-will, of selfishness, of sensuality, of fraud, and of falsehood. With such rivals He bids us know that He will endure no compromise.

But love is prompt to pardon, easily entreated, long suffering, and kind. The parental love, beneath the care of which we live, arrests the discipline, and restrains the holy jealousy which we provoke. He remembers that we are but dust, and will not always

chide, nor keep His anger for ever; but exhibits to us a mercy as high as the heavens are above the earth, and puts away our sins from us, as far as the east is from the west.

Love is indulgent, ingenious, and profuse, in the multiplication of its bounties, and especially of those bounties which have blameless delight for their only assignable object. Hence all the indefinitely varied tastes, desires, and appetites of man, and the endless resources provided for the gratification of them. Philosophy has laboured to explain what is the sublime, and what the beautiful. Theology, declining these problems, finds that the sublime and the beauful reside in that correspondence between the mind and the objects of its perception, which the love of the Creator has established, in order to elevate the thoughts, and to gladden the hearts of His family on earth.

Love necessarily seeks an intercourse with those towards whom it is directed; and therefore, in infinite condescension to our weakness, our Father in heaven was pleased to infuse the Divine Logos, his own communicative energy, into one of the children of Adam, and through him, to impart to us the loftiest thoughts and the holiest aspirations of which our humanity is susceptible. When that presence was withdrawn, and that once audible discourse became silent, the same love opened another channel of intercourse with mankind; even that intercourse which the indwelling Comforter maintains with the spirit and the intellect of every true Christian, soothing his cares, animating his resolves, renewing his strength, enlarging his capacity, enlightening his path, and sanctifying his affections.

And love is ever prompt to make costly self-sacri-

fices. No speech or language in use among mankind can express, because no human intelligence can conceive, the true sense of that revelation which exhibits to us Him who is love, as becoming, in the person of his Son, a sacrifice for us. Alas, for the foolishness which has agitated the world in the attempt to embrace or to analyse so profound a mystery! Our debates about the incarnation and the atonement, resemble nothing more than the discussions which some one has supposed to take place among the animalculæ detected by our microscopes, about the mechanism of the celestial orbs, made known to us by our telescopes. Our real knowledge, however distorted, inflated, and magnified by our phraseology, amounts to little more than our acquaintance with the fact, that by withholding from our Maker and from our brethren, our appointed tribute of love, we raise an obstacle to our future happiness, for the removal of which the Divine Logos united himself to one of the sons of men, and in that human person, lived in humiliation, and died in agony. But a darkness, which no inquiry tends to dissipate, and which no conjecture contributes in any measure to dispel, broods over all questions respecting the nature and the reasons of that obstacle, and respecting the meaning of the hypostatic union of the Logos with our humanity, and respecting the nature of Him by whom and in whom that union is effected, and respecting the sense in which His sufferings have made a propitiation for our sins. All that is permitted to us is to adore, in silence, the awful image set before us of holiness, of woe, and of love unutterable. That God is love, is proclaimed from Bethlehem, and from Calvary, in a voice penetrating the inmost heart; but in a voice which addresses the heart only, and which

summons us not to investigate, but to worship and to love.

We learn from Lord Bacon that, in the prophetic emblem which exhibits the Deity as upborne in His transit through the universe by the wings of ministering angels, the Cherubim represented the heralds of love — the Seraphim the messengers of light. In their progress through our fallen world, those celestial visitants have different enemies to combat, and different hinderances to subdue. By what clouds the light diffused by the flaming Seraphim is quenched or darkened, we have already attempted, though briefly and most imperfectly, to intimate. How the genial warmth of love, radiating from the glowing Cherubim, is chilled and arrested, we all but too familiarly know.

That divine affection is rendered ineffectual in some by the superstition which regards as poisonous the legitimate indulgence of our animal appetites, the enjoyment of our domestic affections, the pleasures of our intellectual tastes, and the delights of interrogating nature, and of resolving her enigmas. The love of God will scarcely penetrate the heart of any man who believes that God is the author of instincts created but to be thwarted, and of desires which must be either snares, if satisfied, or temptations, if debarred from their appropriate objects. Asceticism is, therefore, the enemy of that holy affection which He who is love demands of His creatures.

Neither will love to God take up her abode in the heart of him who, having learnt to consider his reasoning faculty as not merely a fallible, but a dangerous guide, has transferred to his fellow-men the responsibility of solving all the great practical problems of his life. For freedom is the indispensable

aliment of love. It is of a nature too generous to live in spiritual chains and bondage. It can animate the subordinate intelligence only when entrusted by the superior power with a liberal confidence, and permitted to exercise some large measure of self-direction. The slaves of a spiritual despotism can hardly invoke a Father in heaven with filial affiance.

To the full expansion and dévelopement of that child-like affection, it is also necessary that the conscience should retain her supremacy uninvaded by any rival power, and uncontrolled by any human dictation. If that most sensitive of all the plants which are cultivated in the garden of the soul, be grasped, and bent, and pruned by the rude hands of the stranger, it will quickly cease to vibrate to every touch, and to indicate every change in the surrounding atmosphere. It is necessary to the life of all our passions in their healthful exercise, and therefore of divine love, that we cherish our own moral sensibility, and rescue it from the narcotic influence of too close a contact with other minds. The presence of the confessor may sometimes illuminate the conscience; but in such a presence, when habitual, it will lose all those finer delicacies of perception by which every infidelity of the heart to its source and centre, is visited with a prompt rebuke and an effective penalty.

It is essential to that allegiance of the heart, that we contemplate the object of it in the light in which He has been pleased to reveal himself to us, and in no other. If the God in our minds be not the very God of our Bibles, as revealed in the person of his Son, and communicating with us in the person of his Spirit, He will not be the object of that supreme veneration and affiance which He demands from us. Divine love, therefore, will not readily thrive in the soul of him

who worships God as he is depicted by human imagination — or as He is impersonated by an earthly vicar — or as He utters oracular responses, through that shapeless, boundless, placeless abstraction, calling itself the Church — or as He is approached, like some poor earthly sovereign, by a throng of mediators and intercessors, of favourites and courtiers. From such representations of Him who challenges, as His own, the whole heart, and mind, and soul, and strength, who but must turn away, as from illusions at variance with this great law of his moral existence, and cheating him in that very field of vision in which, above every other, it concerns him to see distinctly.

And for this reason it is, that so fatal a lethargy of the heart has benumbed so large a proportion of those who have learnt from the Church of Rome to regard monastic solitude and ascetic rigours as essential to perfection; and to prostrate their minds to human judgments, and their consciences to human authority; and to render their worship to the idols of the human imagination. And therefore it is that every one who is anxious for the happiness and the improvement of mankind, is bound to '*protest*,' as our Reformers *protested*, against a system which, by thus darkening the great truth that 'God is love,' has, in the same measure, defeated the great commandment of loving God supremely.

But they who make that protestation with the most profound seriousness, will not be the last to acknowledge and to lament, that the same consequences have, in no light measure, followed from some parts of the creeds, or at least from some of the mental habits, of the Churches to which they themselves belong.

For the absolute devotion of the whole spirit to God will hardly be practicable to those who, attri-

buting an undue authority to the light to be derived from the animal instincts, follow their guidance with but little habitual watchfulness, self-restraint, or self-distrust; — nor to those who attach so much importance to the instincts of natural affection, as to be ever prompt, at their bidding, to abandon the loftier and more sublime purposes of the Christian life; — nor to those who, referring conscience to the control of feeling, sentiment, and emotion, do not usually subjugate that interior judge to the dominion of any positive and well-ascertained law; — nor to those who, while casting down all other idols, are secretly erecting in their hearts shrines to the human intellect, regarding logic as the single guide to truth, even after logic itself has conducted them to higher and to surer guides; — nor to those who accept and regard the revealed Word of God as if life were given, not by the spirit but by the letter of it, nay, by the letter of some modern version; — nor to those who search the Scriptures as if they were not a mine, which yields its treasures to such as faithfully and laboriously toil for them, but a mint, stored with coins fitted for immediate use, each bearing an indelible impress, and disclosing, at a glance, its exact weight, and quality, and value, and significance; — nor to those who, having become accustomed to contemplate the one central object and omnipresent Idea of the Gospel with a gaze either indecorously familiar or coldly critical, debase that Idea by a homage erotic and irreverent, or render it unimpressive by scholastic inquiries into some imaginary plan or economy of human salvation. And for these reasons it is that a lethargy, scarcely less fatal than that of so many in the communion of the Church of Rome, has benumbed no small proportion of those who hold the purer

creeds, and worship in the more apostolical forms of the Protestant Churches.

Thus, then, in each of the two great divisions of the Christian world, the perception of the great central truth that 'God is love,' and the performance of the great all-embracing duty of loving Him supremely, have been obstructed by the too frequent rejection of some of those rays of light which He has bestowed on mankind, or by the inability to gather and to combine them all into one congruous whole. And yet, in neither of those provinces of the kingdom of Christ, has the obscurity or the disobedience ever been so total as would be inferred by those who listen only to their reciprocal anathemas. Imperfectly, indeed, and through many an intervening mist of prejudice and error, the convergent beams of the divine light have yet deeply penetrated many an intellect, and gladdened many a heart, and directed many a life, which either the Doctors of Rome or the Doctors of Geneva would teach us to regard as having been abandoned to a hopeless reprobation.

For, in the midst of their mutual strife, the true followers of Christ have everywhere, and at all times, learnt that 'God is love,' even from the comparatively faint light of their mere animal instincts. They have gratefully observed how the conservation of our race, and of each member of it, is effected neither by pain, nor by terror, nor by any irresistible compulsion, but by the instrumentality of desires which rouse mankind to healthful pursuits, and of hopes attended by much pleasurable excitement.

From the clearer intimations of our sensitive instincts they have drawn the same lesson. They have perceived how the system of social life is carried on by means of affections which are delightful exactly in

proportion as they are benevolent, and which are enduring and intense exactly in proportion to the degree in which the objects of them are dependent upon us. Those feelings, whether conjugal, parental, fraternal, friendly, social, patriotic, or philanthropic, which impel us to exertion and reconcile us to suffering, are also the sources of our greatest enjoyments; and sluggish, indeed, must be the understanding or the heart, which can miss the inference, that He who thus constituted our nature must have willed that we should be happy.

Our intellectual instincts also bear their testimony to the Divine benevolence — a testimony which has been accepted by every genuine member of the Church in all her various divisions. For it is by means of those instincts alone, that we ever attain to truth, or to any measure of intellectual repose. Those indestructible and ultimate foundations of reasoning which are possessed by the whole family of man in common, are the invaluable patrimony of each member of that family. Without them, there could be no intercommunity of opinions amongst mankind, no enduring fellowship of mutual interests, no sure co-operation in the same general designs. They hold us all together by bonds never entirely to be broken; and, however wide may have been our deviations into error or crime, they are still the landmarks of the mind, indicating the paths by which we may return to virtue and to truth.

The light of our judicial and moral instincts lend their powerful aid in disclosing to us all, in whatever part of the 'City of God' our dwelling may be cast, the same consolatory view of Him in whom we have our being. If conscience lays bare the infirmities, the waywardness, and the corruption of

our wills, it also proclaims that He has provided us with a continual corrective of those disorders — that He has not left himself without a witness and a vicegerent in our hearts — that His love is exerted, not only in His parental discipline of us, but also in our own discipline of ourselves — that our Father has not left his feeble children to incur all the dangers which beset their paths, without the presence of a guardian and a monitor, by obedience to whom they may attain to an abiding tranquillity, and to a continual increase of power.

The social instincts of every disciple of Christ contribute also to assure him that he is one of the children of that gracious Being whose mercy is over all His works. For the great safeguard of our social happiness consists in the general diffusion, by means of those instincts, of the sympathy which constrains the several members of society to unite in regarding any sentiment or action as the fit subject of commendation or of censure. On this basis rests the rightful dominion of the noblest spirits, and the willing, though often unconscious subjection of subordinate minds. To this we owe that social economy which inflicts on crime the most effective punishment, and secures for virtue an eventual though often a tardy triumph. Nor is the hyperbole, *Vox populi vox Dei*, a mere extravagance, if it be understood only as recognising that beneficent constitution of our common nature which renders every concurrence of mankind in their moral judgments at once so terrible to guilt and so encouraging to good desert.

Neither will any peculiarity in his theological opinions exclude any true Christian from the assurance that 'God is love,' which he derives from the light of understanding. For God has placed us here

in the centre of enigmas to engage our mental powers, as well as of mysteries to control our natural presumption; and of all the gratifications of which we are capable, the most habitual, the most unfailing, and the least contaminated by any admixture of guilt, are those which we derive from a solution of those enigmas, and from that measure of success which attends the ardent pursuit of truth. Thus the whole interior life of every studious man is giving him continued assurance of the beneficence of his Creator, because he lives in a ceaseless succession of healthful stimulants, and of rewards which animate without satiating his curiosity.

And thus, to all who contemplate it in a devout spirit, human life presents itself as a scene which, though beset with many trials, and not much abounding in intense delights or in positive pleasures, is yet replete (to borrow the distinction of Locke) with ever-recurring *satisfactions*. Contracted as our range of choice usually is, and frequently as we are reduced to choose between paths, each of which is dangerous and painful, yet, whoever will attentively consider the nature, the varieties, and the amount of the minute occurrences which collectively compose the chronicle of his hours, his days, or his life, will be constrained to acknowledge that his instincts, animal, sensitive, intellectual, judicial, moral, and social, yield him an amount of pleasurable occupation, thought, and feeling, transcending incomparably the sum of his occupations, thoughts, and feelings, in which pain preponderates. He who judges otherwise, is usually the dupe of his own imagination, which, by placing him in positions unfamiliar, and therefore distasteful to him, induces him to ascribe to the great mass of mankind, the suffering which an exchange into their

circumstances would, at first, inflict on the observer himself. But the fisherman at the Orkneys, the miner in Northumberland, the occupant of a cellar in Saint Giles's, the manual labourer in the cotton factory, are all, in their various ways, quickened into grateful activity by some or other of these various instincts throughout the weariest hours of the longest day; and all find, in the success of that activity, the continually recurring *satisfaction* which the great Author of human society has designed for all the members of it.

Christians of all creeds discover, in the light of human authority, proofs of the love of Him from whom, as the fountain head, proceeds all legitimate power. Nothing was apparently more practicable than that each human being should have derived the light required for his guidance through the world directly from God himself, without the intervention of any human teacher. But man has been made the channel through which truth is disclosed to man, and the appointed instrument by which precepts of duty are impressed on him, in order that room may be provided for the developement, and occasion for the exercise, of many of the happiest affections and propensities of his nature. By dividing our race into the two classes, of instructors clothed with authority, and of pupils bound to submission, God has provided for the growth, in the superior relation, of fidelity, diligence, condescension, and tenderness, and, in the inferior relation, of teachableness, reverence, gratitude, and humility. By thus knitting together our best affections and our highest wisdom, He has given to the Church much of the endearing character of the Family, and to the Family much of the sacred character of the Church; and has so framed the constitution,

both of ecclesiastical and of domestic society, as to render each of them one of the highest and purest elements of our happiness.

These intimations of the parental character of God are, indeed, made to all men, and not to those only to whom He has imparted the light of revelation; although to them the truth that 'God is love,' is disclosed in terms incomparably more distinct than any which were ever employed by Natural Religion. And it is chiefly by the light which the inspired volume throws on the condition of human nature and of human society, that we are enabled to discern in that system of things so many evidences of the divine benevolence, and of our own corresponding obligation to render our tribute of filial love to Him by whom that economy has been constructed.

And yet, who ever meditated on the character of God, and on the divine dispensations as they are made known to us in the Holy Scriptures, without the oppressive sense of a mystery beyond expression, momentous, fearful, and inscrutable? How terrific is the emphasis which the history of the Bible gives to the menaces of the Bible! Retribution is stamped on every page and line of that awful volume; and he who does not discern that impress on the sacred text, must interpret it by some canons of criticism which would be universally rejected as altogether extravagant and wild, if applied to any other writing. Such canons are, however, in our own times, diligently employed by the learned, and eagerly welcomed by the unlearned. That mythic theory, of which Strauss is the great modern teacher, when filtered through various mediums, and purged of its coarser ingredients, is imbibed by multitudes amongst us, and is producing in their minds results not dis-

similar in kind, and scarcely inferior in degree, to those which were induced by the scepticism of the eighteenth century.

The real, though often unavowed, ground of the doubts which are thus overclouding the spirits of so many of the nominal disciples of Christ, is the hopeless dejection with which they contemplate that part of the Christian scheme which is supposed to consign the vast majority of our race to a future state, in which woe inconceivable in amount, is also eternal in duration. From this doctrine the hearts of most men turn aside, not only with an instinctive horror, but with an invincible incredulity; and of those who believe that it really proceeded from the lips of Christ himself, many are sorely tempted by it either to doubt the divine authority of any of His words, or to destroy their meaning by conjectural evasions of their force.

There are, indeed, others to whom it appears irreverent and even impious to hold parley with such doubts at all. They forbid us to inquire whether the generally-received sense of our Redeemer's language on this melancholy and overwhelming theme, be really the sense in which he spoke. They resent, as mere conceit and arrogance, the opposition of the human understanding to what they consider as the unequivocal declarations of the Son of God himself; and demand that every voice which would presume to controvert those declarations should be subdued into a submissive silence. And most just is the rebuke, and most reasonable the demand, if it be indeed the fact that our Divine Teacher has really revealed to us the eternity of the punishment inflicted in a future state for the sins of men in this life. For, as the truth of God is the corner stone of all religion, so the truth of Christ is the corner stone of Christianity.

Disclaiming, therefore, the very slightest sympathy with that arrogance which would reject any part of divine revelation on the ground of its inconsistency with the dogmas of human wisdom, we would yet (in the exercise of that freedom which all Protestants, in terms at least, assert for themselves and allow to others) venture to inquire, or rather to suggest the inquiry, whether any sufficient authority really exists for asserting that either Christ himself, or his apostles, taught the doctrine of a penal retribution, which is to be 'eternal' in the sense in which we believe the Deity Himself to be 'eternal.'

With the exception of one dubious expression in the book of Daniel, the Old Testament is entirely silent on the subject of the eternity of future punishment. The same thing is true of a very large majority of the books of the New Testament. But in the 44th, the 46th, and the 48th verses of the ninth chapter of the Gospel of Saint Mark, we find our Saviour speaking with the most emphatic iteration of 'their worm' which 'dieth not,' and of 'the fire' which 'is not quenched;' and in the 43d and 45th verses of the same chapter, He, with yet deeper emphasis, refers to 'the fire that never shall be quenched.' Words, doubtless, of fearful significance! — words which, however understood, can intimate nothing less than a danger, at the thought of which the stoutest heart should quake and the holiest stand in awe! But while the reverence due to our Divine Teacher forbids us to subtract one jot or tittle from the force of his expressions, it no less distinctly forbids us to enhance their force by adding one jot or tittle to them.

Let it, then, be considered, *first*, that the words quoted from the 43d and 45th verses ('the fire that

never shall be quenched'), are rejected by some eminent critics as a spurious interpolation; and, *secondly*, that, supposing the text to be genuine, the words πῦρ τὸ ἄσβεστον mean, not 'the fire that never shall be quenched,' but 'the inextinguishable fire;' and, *thirdly*, that no one of these five verses in St. Mark's Gospel asserts, either in express terms or by any necessary implication, that the pains to which they refer will be endured throughout eternity. They assert only that the agent or instrument by means of which those pains are to be inflicted is of an immortal or an indestructible nature.

It must, however, be acknowledged that the language of Christ, in the closing verse of the twenty-fifth chapter of St. Matthew, is perfectly clear and unambiguous, as it stands in our English Bibles. 'These,' he says, 'shall go away into *everlasting punishment*.' It therefore is of infinite moment to inquire whether the words which our translators have thus given us really correspond with the words which our Saviour himself uttered.

Now no human being knows, or ever can know, what were the very words which thus fell from the lips of Christ. They were spoken in a dialect of the Syro-Chaldaic. No one even knows with any certainty whether our extant Greek version of them proceeded from the pen of St. Matthew. On the hypothesis adopted by many high critical authorities, of an intermediate Hebrew gospel, we must believe the contrary. Assuming, however, that the hand of an inspired writer did trace the very words εἰς κόλασιν αἰώνιον, it will yet not necessarily follow that either of those words is a precise equivalent for the original which it represents; because, for terms so abstract, perfectly precise equivalents can seldom, if ever, be

found in languages so essentially dissimilar in their structure and genius as the Syro-Chaldaic and the Greek. Let, however, the sacred text be read on the supposition, however unfounded, that our Redeemer himself actually pronounced the very terms which now stand in the Greek Testament. On that supposition can we really find in them the terrific and overwhelming sense which the popular opinion attributes to them?

It would be a mere impertinence if the writer of these pages should presume to engage in a critical discussion of the precise force and meaning of any passage in a Greek author. It would be still more extravagant, if he should lay claim to the skill requisite for analysing the sense of any Greek expressions deeply imbued in Syriac and Hebraic idioms and allusions. It is sufficient for the immediate purpose to say, in reference to the merely critical or grammatical inquiry, that the words in question are manifestly susceptible of the different meanings which so many scholars have at different times pointed out. They might, for example, be rendered with literal accuracy either by the words 'into lifelong punishment' — or by the words 'into perpetual abscission.' But if the meaning of those expressions be really ambiguous or equivocal, then are we not only free, but bound, to adopt such a construction of them as may be derived from the probabilities in favour of any one or other of the possible meanings. What, then, are those probabilities?

First, then, let it be considered, that the doctrine of the eternity of the future retribution, forms no *necessary* substratum of any other Christian doctrine. If it could be completely disproved, its disappearance from the Christian system would not dissolve, nor

apparently impair, the strength of any other part of that mighty fabric. Every argument, every narrative, every expostulation, every warning in the Bible would be as complete and as intelligible, if not as emphatical, without it as with it. The same thing cannot be said of any other of the main truths revealed in the Holy Scriptures. Each of them is an integral part of the system to which it belongs. Is it, then, probable, that a doctrine which, if true, infinitely outweighs in importance all the rest of the articles of our creeds, should have been propounded as a mere isolated truth, standing in no necessary connection with the rest? Is it not far more probable that there is an error in that construction of our Saviour's words, which would render Him the promulgator of it?

The angel who descended from heaven and proclaimed to the shepherds the incarnation of the Redeemer, announced himself as the herald 'of good tidings of great joy which should be to all people.' But if it be indeed true, that He who was thus made incarnate, proclaimed an eternity of unutterable woe to the vast majority of those who, from generation to generation, throng our streets, our marts, and our churches, how shall we reconcile the angelic announcement with this awful proclamation? The Gospel is, indeed, intelligence of blessedness, surpassing imagination, to 'the *few* who are chosen;' but that same Gospel is, on the popular hypothesis, not less intelligence of wretchedness, surpassing imagination, to 'the *many* who are called.' Is not, therefore, the accuracy of that hypothesis involved in much improbability?

The Bible teaches us that Christ came into the world to bruise the serpent's head, to destroy the works of the devil, and to establish the kingdom of

God; and Christ himself declared that 'He saw Satan like lightning fall from Heaven.' Is it reasonable to accept any construction of the other words of Christ, which would seem to ascribe to the Spirit of Evil an eternal triumph over the Spirit of Good, in the persons of the vast majority of the race whom He lived and died to redeem?

In our present life, trouble, pain, and sorrow are, indeed, thickly sown. But they exist among us as anomalies, not as laws, — as the medicinal and remedial provisions which the Creative wisdom has infused into this economy of things, not as the ultimate end contemplated by that wisdom. In this world 'nothing terminates on evil;' although, in this world, evil so unhappily abounds. Do not, therefore, all the analogies of the Divine government raise a strong presumption against that interpretation of our Saviour's discourse, which represents him as foretelling a future economy of things, in which evil, not remedial but penal, not transient but eternal, is to be the doom of the vast majority of the children of Adam?

Throughout the Holy Scriptures a constant appeal is made to those moral sentiments which God has himself implanted in our nature. Our heavenly Father has graciously condescended everywhere to point out to us the sacred harmony between His law as revealed by prophets and evangelists, and His law as written by himself on our hearts; and from that harmony we are taught to draw the best and highest proof of the inspiration of those sacred writings. Deeply conscious with what profound reverence it behoves us to apply that test of truth to any opinion deduced by the Church at large from Holy Scripture, we may yet venture to inquire whether it could be successfully applied in the case under consideration?

If the words ascribed to our Saviour are not inexorably bound down to the construction they usually receive, by the absolutely inflexible force of the text and of the context, is it not most reasonable to adopt some other construction, to which our own natural sense of justice and equity can respond as clearly as it responds to all the rest of the inspired canon?

So inveterate is the corruption of the human heart, that, in the judgment of some, the infliction and announcement of no penalty less than that of eternal misery would be sufficient to turn it aside from present sinfulness. But does the dread of that terrific penalty really stem the headlong current of iniquity? Is it really productive of any corresponding alarm? Does it produce an alarm equal to that which would have been excited by the announcement of a penalty of infinitely less amount, but definite and intelligible? Does the world—does the Church—do her ministers—do her saints—really believe this part of the language of our Redeemer in that sense in which they familiarly interpret it? Is any human mind so constituted as to bear the incumbent weight of so fearful a probability of an evil so utterly beyond the reach of exaggeration? Is the texture of any human body vigorous enough to sustain the throes of so agonising an anticipation? What means the whole course and system of life which is passing hourly before our eyes, and through which we are ourselves passing? Why have our preachers time to engage in study, to harmonise the periods of their sermons, to give heed to our wretched ecclesiastical disputes, to devote one superfluous instant to food, to repose, or to occupy themselves with any other thing than the proclamation of the horrors of the approaching calamity, and the explanation of the only way of

escape from it? Let any honest man fairly propose to himself, and fairly answer the question, whether the unutterable disparity between his actual interest in all the frivolities of life, and his professed belief in an eternity of woe, impending probably over himself, but certainly over the vast majority of the human race, does not convict him of professing to believe more than he actually believes? And, if so, is there not some reason to doubt whether he has not erred in attributing to his Saviour a meaning, for which, after all, he cannot find any real place in his own mind, or any vital influence on his own heart?

Nothing can be more remote from the design with which these pages are written than to suggest a doubt whether penal retribution in the future state does really await 'the many who are called,' but who throng 'the broad way which leadeth to destruction.' Neither does the writer of these pages presume to intimate that either the nature or the continuance of that penalty are such as to be fitly contemplated by any soul of man without the most profound awe and the most lively alarm. To propagate or to entertain such opinions would be to question the truth of Him who is emphatically Himself 'The Truth.' The questions proposed for inquiry are — whether He, or any one of His inspired Apostles, has really affirmed, in express words, that the retribution shall be endured eternally by those on whom it shall fall? — whether all the words employed by Him, or by them, on the subject are not satisfied by understanding that the punishment is eternal only inasmuch as it involves the ultimate destruction, or annihilation, of those on whom it is to be inflicted? — whether the sense usually ascribed to this part of Holy Scripture is congruous with the spirit of the rest of the revealed will of

God? — whether it is not really derived from ecclesiastical traditions, rather than from any sound and unbiassed criticism? — and whether our own translators have not been induced, by those traditions, to enhance the real force of our Saviour's words by a forced and exaggerated version of them?

These suggestions or surmises are, however, opposed to the commonly-received opinion of, perhaps, all the Christian Churches. The most learned could not, therefore, offer them, except with the most extreme diffidence. By one who can make no claim whatever to learning, properly so called, either as a theologian or as a linguist, they are proposed with the deepest possible consciousness of his liability to error. He knows how weighty is the presumption in favour of the construction which the Church of Christ has, in all ages, given to words which, however understood, are the most terrific which have ever been spoken in the ears of man. And if, indeed, that construction truly represents the real meaning of those fearful words, what remains for him who revolves the prospect they open to that great human family of which he is a member, except to repose the aching heart on those declarations, so copious, so unequivocal, so interwoven with the whole scheme, structure, and system of our faith, which concur in assuring us that 'God is love,' and which will still encourage or rather constrain us to hope even against hope, that no rational being throughout His vast universe shall ever be so entirely exiled from His fatherly presence, as to be unable to turn to Him with penitence, or as to be beyond the reach of that mercy of which we are so often assured that it 'endureth for ever.'

This digression (if such it be) from the more immediate subject of these pages, has been suggested,

and may, it is hoped, be vindicated, by the consideration, that the generally-received opinion regarding the endless duration of the state of punishment, is among the most effective of all the causes which are at present inducing amongst us that virtual abandonment of Christianity, which assigns a mythic sense to almost every part of the sacred oracles. Learnedly and wisely as that fallacy has been combated by many, their yet more serious attention might, perhaps, be advantageously given to the inquiry whether that opinion, which is to so large a number an insuperable rock of offence, might not be either retracted or qualified without any sacrifice of truth; and whether, if so, they would not contribute, by such an acknowledgment, to reclaim the deserters to the camp much more effectually than by any assault on the positions in which they have openly entrenched themselves.

Except so far as it is overcast by the portentous cloud which the doctrine of the eternity of penal retribution throws over it, the Word of God reveals the love of God with all the effulgence of a noontide sun. It makes that disclosure chiefly, of course, to such as most freely receive that Word, and as most devoutly revolve it. Yet so bright are those 'shafts of day,' that, by many a reflection, they irradiate even those to whom spiritual despotism forbids an unrestrained access to the inspired volume. For, in those pages, love is exhibited, not as an abstract quality or affection, but as a living person; and that impersonation, whether it be presented to us under the veil of a tutelary and national Deity, as in the last four books of the Pentateuch, or under the veil of Christ's humanity, as in the four Gospels, is still ever one and ever the same, — ever yearning over our fallen race with more than parental tenderness, and ever resist-

ing our suicidal self-will with the wholesome, though reluctant, severity of a Father. And the love thus impersonated to all Christian people, is no more the object of the exclusive knowledge, or of the exclusive adoration, of any single society of Christians, than the air we breathe, the ocean we navigate, or the sunshine by which we are warmed. To shut the gates of mercy on all who will not adopt our opinions, join in our solemnities, and attach themselves to our party, is one of the most inveterate of human infirmities; because it is one of the most inveterate of human habits, to avert the eye from some of the many rays of light by which it is the good purpose of God that we should illuminate our minds and guide our steps. To throw open those gates as widely as Love desires, and as Truth allows, is, on the other hand, the delight of those by whom all those confluent rays are received, and welcomed, and harmonised.

There is, therefore, a catholic Belief and a catholic Morality, broad and comprehensive enough to form the eternal basis of a catholic Church and of a true Christian Unity. That Belief is, that 'God is light,' and that 'God is love.' That Morality is, that we love Him supremely, and each other as ourselves. That Church is composed of all who, in the strength of this belief, are habitually striving to practise this morality. That Unity is effected not by any external conformities, but by the same interior spirit and hidden life manifesting itself, in the members of all Christian communities, by acts of devotion, of humility, of self-sacrifice, of temperance, of justice, of truth, and of peace.

Holding these opinions, we have presumed, in the preceding volumes, to record the acts, and to celebrate the virtues, of some of the saints both of Rome, and of

our native land. Our Hagiology is drawn from many distant, and, as some may think, from many incongruous, sources. We have ventured to extol the heroic daring of Hildebrand, and the tender enthusiasm of Francis of Assisi. We have dared to applaud the energies, at once so passionate and so calm, so widely diffused and yet so concentrated, of Loyola and his first associates. We have celebrated cordially, however faintly, the fervent zeal of Martin Luther, steeped in every human affection, even when most instinct with a diviner influence. We have rendered homage to the piety which sustained the intellectual prowess of Mabillon and his companions; and have deeply felt our incompetency to render any meet tribute to the memories of the wise and holy men of Port-Royal, and of her illustrious daughters. Passing to our own land — our glorious land — and, above all other things, glorious in the parentage of the mighty transatlantic nation to which God has so largely committed the future destinies of mankind, — we have attempted to depict Richard Baxter, dwelling on the confines of the temporal and of the eternal states, and performing miracles of industry and of devotedness, over the truth of which no scepticism can cast a shade of doubt; and Whitfield and his disciples, labouring to evangelise the world with an energy almost as rare as miracle, and with a faith in themselves, in their cause, and in their Divine Leader, which no scepticism could ever cloud, and which no disappointment co[illegible]r weaken. And, then, contracting our vision w[illegible]arrower, a more familiar, and, in truth, a domestic circle, we have hazarded the exhibition of a series of portraitures drawn from the life, and which, until they shall be superseded by some more skilful hand, may serve as sketches of a society,

to which England and the world at large owe no common debt of gratitude. But since, in that society, no such benefactor of mankind could be found, who did not worship within the pale of our national Church, we have ventured to draw, from his own books, a conjectural likeness of a Nonconformist, whom that society would have received as a brother, if his times had fallen in their generation.

To our own apprehension, at least, there is, in these attempts at ecclesiastical biography, a certain unity of design, because all the subjects of it held that Belief, practised that Morality, and were members of that Church which, in the sense already explained, we regard as catholic. They all believed that 'God is light,' and reverently sought that divine illumination. They all believed that 'God is love,' and devoutly surrendered their highest affections to Him. They all loved their brethren of mankind as the common children of their Father in heaven. They have all deserved, and some few of them have found, an infinitely nobler memorial among men than it is permitted to the author of these pages to raise to any man. Yet he will not think that these pages have been written in vain, if they shall stimulate any one gifted with the requisite abilities and learning, to give to the Christian world a Protestant Hagiology, celebrating the Saints of that universal Church, which embraces within its ample fold every faithful servant of Christ, whatever may be the peculiarities of his ecclesiastical system, or of his theological cr

THE END.

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